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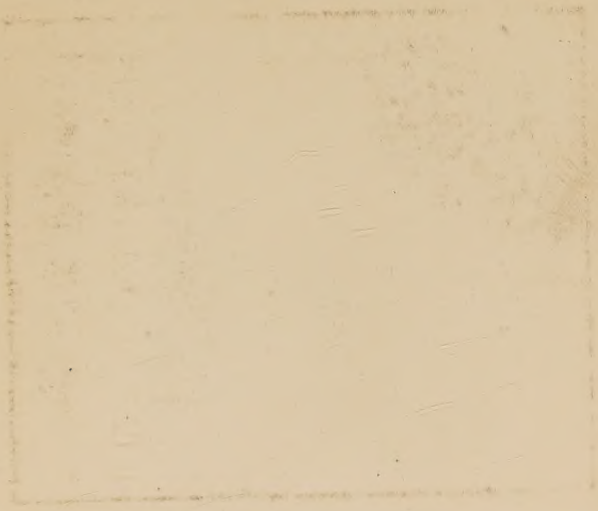

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MAN

AND THE

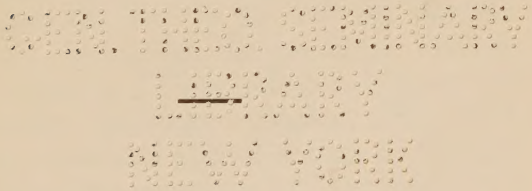
DIVINE ORDER

ESSAYS IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION AND IN CONSTRUCTIVE IDEALISM

BY

HORATIO W. DRESSER

AUTHOR OF "THE POWER OF SILENCE," "THE PERFECT WHOLE" "VOICES OF FREEDOM," "LIVING BY THE SPIRIT," ETC.



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PREFACE

PROBABLY all thoughtful people would agree that the relation of man to the universe is the profoundest theme that can engage the human mind, but not all would agree in regard to the method to be employed. The present volume aims to meet various practical and philosophical demands without insisting upon any one method except the spontaneous development of thought. Hence these essays, written at different times and not in the order here printed, have not been reduced to a consecutively developed whole. Chapter V., originally a lecture entitled "The Divine Order," gave the clue to the unifying thought; Chapter XI. exemplifies the prevailing method; and the discussion of Plato's idealism contains the supplementary principle. Chapters XII.–XVI. are largely concerned with objections to the general doctrine; the exposition of Christianity is a further development of the interpretation published a few years ago in *The Christ Ideal;* while the last chapter outlines the system implied in the various discussions, as well as in the ten volumes of essays which preceded the present

more mature volume. The fundamental thought of the book is so dependent on the empirical value of each chapter that it is impossible to suggest it in advance. Empirical from first to last, the book will profit the reader in so far as the leading ideas are tested not only by reference to accepted religious and philosophical standards, but in relation to the realities and ideals of individual experience.

H. W. D.

Cambridge, Mass.,
July, 1903.

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MAN AND THE DIVINE ORDER

CHAPTER I

THE SEARCH FOR UNITY

PLATO once defined philosophy as "a meditation on death." At first thought, this characterisation seems absurd, and more than one thinker of note has protested against it. But in a sense it is profoundly true. Ordinarily, man has little interest in the consideration of life as a whole. The easy routine of animal existence, the fascination of business and social life is usually more inviting. Prosperity is not the parent of speculation. But when an unusual event occurs,—a volcanic explosion, a terrible earthquake, or the loss of a passenger steamer at sea with all on board,—thousands of troubled people seek an explanation of the catastrophe. Why did God permit it? is the customary query. How happens it that we are spared? Is our turn likely to come in such startling fashion? Superstition vies with theology and metaphysics in the

endeavour to answer. Nothing more surely reveals the degree of superstition remaining than these speculative attempts to account for a great calamity.

Private misfortune as readily drives man into the realm of speculation. Many a man has become an atheist when, suddenly and cruelly, as it seemed to him, he was bereft of wife or child. Not until the hand of death strikes its heartless blow do men and women begin eagerly to inquire if there be another world. Calamity usually brings either despair or faith, for the same hardship which unmakes the belief of one may be the occasion for the fruition of another's faith. Not until we are forced are we inclined to think profoundly. Scepticism is as likely to be the first result as conviction. But at any rate the mind is in activity, and in movement there is life. Something to account for which demands his entire wit—that is the boon of the philosopher. Religion, too, grows by dint of doubt and despair, and close upon the profoundest sorrow the most sustaining sense of love may come.

The history of primitive man undoubtedly followed the same course. As long as the chase was successful, and there was an abundance to eat, our prehistoric brothers probably did not trouble about the nature of things. But when floods and famines came, wars and pestilences,

the whole face of things was changed. If a thunderstorm broke into the harmony of the savage's life, it was natural to think that some being in the sky was angry. The myths that have come down to us show that human imagination was as fertile thousands of years ago as now in proposing hypotheses to account for calamities. But when our ancient ancestors stood in the presence of death—what could have been more provocative of philosophic thought? Then meditation began in earnest, and did not stop short of belief in a certain degree of unity as attributable to the nature of things, a unity which at least sufficed until some fresh catastrophe broke startlingly in upon man's philosophic repose.

The first explanations were, of course, crude and mythological, though perhaps no more fantastic than some of the theories of the divine wrath proposed in modern times. But these myths all bore the same stamp. Something had broken into the usual round of things, and that something was misunderstood. Man is a lover of success, hence an explanation must be sought. If the calamity was apparently due to an angry god, that god must be propitiated. If some one had sinned, some one must suffer. For practically and theoretically man is a lover of unity, — both his peace of mind and his business are dependent on it. But his reaction was undoubtedly practical

and poetic long before it was what we should call philosophical.

For primitive man evidently believed in a chaos of unities, rather than in a well-knit whole. Different deities were supposed to preside over different functions in nature and in human life. Each time one of the deities got out of humour he must be individually propitiated. There was peace only in those happy moments when no god chanced to be angry. In course of time each function in life came to have its deity; and if man had philosophised he would have been compelled to confess that the ultimate world of things was such that a polytheistic host somehow existed contemporaneously, despite their warrings. The deities grew in numbers, instead of decreasing. It is with genuine sympathy that we consider the mass of obligations by which people were fettered in early civilised times. It is with true insight into the perplexities of the case that Shakespeare makes Cassius exclaim, "Now in the name of all the gods at once!" From the tending of the sacred fire in the precincts of home to the public festivals, the preparation for war, and the settling of public and private difficulties, the Greeks and the Romans were everywhere beholden to these mythological adaptations, the sum of which was supposed to make life desirable and successful.

In India, mythology gradually melted into

spiritual pantheism, so that escape from the perplexities of a thousand unities was found in one great whole, without parts, where perfect bliss was attained. The entire process of adjustment and readjustment, as this change went on, is portrayed in the Vedas and Upanishads. Absolute unity once attained, every possible problem was settled by reference to that. In other lands, also, the assumption of absolute unity has seemed the best way out of the confusion; and mysticism in various forms has always been an inviting resource. But in the Western world the tendency has been largely toward individuality of theory and adaptation to the world, so that for the majority unity in the genuine sense of the word is still an ideal.

The reactions of primitive man tended to take an animistic form, so Tylor and the other anthropologists tell us. That is, man interpreted the phenomena of nature by reading his own feelings into them. Man felt the pulsations of life within, the beating of his heart and the other physiological activities, and naturally regarded the signs of life around him as indications of the existence of similar beings behind or within everything that moved. The flowing river was a thing of life, the cloud was animated,—even trees and stones were regarded as alive. Hence it was natural to attribute all unusual phenomena to

souls or deities, active in the storm, in the flood, or the rumblings of the earthquake. All the world was alive for primitive man. The idea of matter as dead or inert is a recent theory. Death itself was supposed to be due to a living being of some sort: for example, when a man was drowned in some "hostile" river. Hence all man's dealings with death and the departed were based on the thought of life. It was a low form of belief, to be sure. Sometimes the soul was actually identified with the pulse, the breath, or the blood. But nevertheless it was belief in life, which was everywhere held to be the cause of movement,—so the recorded beliefs and myths indicate, and so linguistic remains tell us; hence the personifications, the tales told about the deities who were supposed to be active in nature. The natural function was practically identified with a god in many of these early myths. Thus the Hindoo god Agni was literally the fire which men could kindle, the fire which "flared up," and the same that flashed in the sky. But little by little the supposed deity was disengaged from his natural basis and addressed in the sacred hymns as a person. Greek mythology in time became so personal that dramatic incidents entirely took the place of the old-time nature-activities. But even here man still read his own life into the activities which he poetically described.

We may safely say, then, that the first general conception of unity which science enables us to reconstruct is the idea that all nature is animated by beings resembling man. The first great thought was the conception of life,—a wonderfully poetic idea it seems at this distance. For imagine the emotions of man in the presence of a waterfall, whose leapings were regarded as the movements of a living being! In another sense, this animism was a terrible idea, since man seemed to be surrounded by a peopled world where there were many unfriendly spirits, so that he had to be constantly propitiating, offering up the firstlings of the flock, if not making sacrifices of human beings. Those were days of superstition such that it is practically beyond our powers of imagination to picture man's emotional reactions. Anthropologists warn us that we must first endeavour to put ourselves in primitive man's place as an emotional being, before we venture to conceive of his beliefs. For primitive man was doubtless a creature of great emotions of awe and fear, cosmic feelings, such as we never know in our highly intellectual age. These emotional reactions probably came long before the period of articulate belief,—poetry far antedated science. When definite beliefs at length began to appear they were tardy expressions of what man had long felt, and hence they came out of his most intimately personal life.

That animism, or the interpretation of all motion in terms of life similar to man's life, was universal we have evidence in the great collections of myths which scientific men have made in recent years. There is remarkable similarity in corresponding myths gathered from all over the world, whether the myths are thousands of years old or believed by men who are still in the stage of development of the great savage peoples of the past. Thus myths gathered in Africa and Australia may throw light on the myths of ancient Greece and Rome. Students of Greek philosophy are familiar with the survivals of some of these ancient beliefs which are found even as late as the writings of Plato and Aristotle. The idea that the soul, or at any rate one of man's psychic functions or souls, was the source of movement in the body persisted to the end in Greek psychology. In fact, animism was the accepted theory of movement until the Greek philosophers advanced a better notion. There was no break between Greek mythology and Greek science. The cosmogonic poetry of Hesiod took the place of earlier accounts of the origin of things. Then the cosmological theories of the Ionians were brought forward as substitutes. But the more scientific principle proposed by Thales, namely, "water," was still a kind of divine, poetic somewhat; nature was still said to be "full of gods."

Thus, if we would reconstruct the various conceptions of unity which men have entertained we must start with animism, with mythology in its various forms, regarded as taking the place of what we now differentiate as science and religion. That is, these ancient myths were sometimes beliefs in magical powers which man believed he could use to his advantage, and again they were religious beliefs expressive of his awe in the presence of nature, or his belief in immortality and the land of the blessed dead. What we call science disengaged itself but slowly and very late. To the degree that science flourished, mythology disappeared. Its appearance in ancient Greece marked one of those stages noted above when the old unity was broken into, when man was no longer satisfied to regard the universe as the field of activity of multitudes of gods. More strictly speaking, it was not till science appeared that man could in any real sense regard the world as one. When man began to think systematically, polytheism no longer met his demands; hence his centre of interest was shifted.

We are reminded by the above reference to India, however, that for many millions of people a religious way of regarding things as a unitary whole has sufficed, so that the need of what we in the West call science has not been felt. Two unities broke free from the original polytheism

which once held sway. The history of thought in India is in many ways decidedly unlike that of the West. According to our scientific men, there is no unity at all where there is no systematic principle. But the great movement of thought which began in crude polytheism and culminated in Hindoo pantheism, to the disparagement of all methods of knowing except spiritual contemplation, is one of the most profoundly suggestive chapters in human life. To condemn the result as unsound, without long and careful inquiry, would be as great a mistake as to read our modern ideas into the myths of savage times. If we would do justice to man's unitary beliefs, we must imaginatively put ourselves in the place not only of those who regard the world as the product of an extramundane creator, but of those who deem the world itself a great living being; or of those, on the other hand, who declare that there is but one great Self, "Brahman"—"one, without a second."

Among the Persians a dualistic way of looking at things became prominent, and life was regarded as a warfare of good and evil. This religious dualism later worked its way to some extent into Christian thought. But viewed retrospectively, and despite the occasional appearance of dualism, the growth of the human mind is seen to be in large part a search for unity. Although in his

superstitious days man was at best merely "feeling after" God, as we conceive of Him, yet the love of unity was evidently the implicit motive. Philosophy has been, for the most part, a quest of the same sort, that is, the search for a single rational principle by which to explain the most diverse phenomena. Religion would be impossible in the larger sense without faith in the unity of things. Science starts with the unity of nature as the great assumption which makes all her pursuits possible. The growth of thought has doubtless been hampered by certain presuppositions in favour of particular types of unity; and it is well to remind ourselves that our conceptions of unity are only *conceptions*. In a sense, the real proof of unity will be the attainment of that universal harmony of things which the mind puts before itself as the highest goal of our social life. Yet despite our philosophical failures, no endeavour is so inspiring as the persistent quest of unity, even in the face of facts which seem too varied to permit of unification into any system which the human mind can formulate.

The belief in a man-like creator, who wrought the world from outside in a few days, or creative epochs, then retired to watch over it, is one of the neatest illustrations of unitary belief. The earth was then supposed to be the centre of interest, and everything on it was said to be for

man's benefit. The unity was sometimes broken into by special creations and providences. Yet in the main the conception met men's demands until their peace was rudely interrupted by the pioneers of modern science: Copernicus with his theory that the sun is the centre of things, and Giordano Bruno with his belief in the infinity of worlds. How great was the readjustment then required! How man fought for his position as the centre of creation, a contest which ended only with the nineteenth-century discovery that man is in every way a part of nature, one among many beings and greatly beholden to all that preceded his advent!

The argument from design in nature to the existence of a God of nature is another neat way of attaining unity. This is a way of approach to belief in God which will probably always appeal to the popular mind. Nothing seems clearer than the proof that, since evidences of intelligence are everywhere about us, there was a Creator prior to all adaptations and adjustments of means to ends. Yet such arguments have come to hold a subordinate place since the days of Kant's searching analyses in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, and since the discoveries of Darwin. We are now aware that nature produces misfits, that purposeless organs survive, and that there is a far greater production of animal life than the world would

have room for were there no sharp struggle for life. The same facts by which some people have sought to prove God's goodness are by others taken to mean that God is cruel. It is doubtful if the facts of nature, considered by themselves, show conclusively what kind of being God is. Nature is as fertile as the Christian Bible in the suggestion of proofs.

Philosophically considered, nature is at best only a part, not the whole, of the ultimate system of things. Any argument based on natural facts must, then, be reconsidered from the larger point of view. Even the argument from the fact of evolution to the God of evolution may prove to be only a temporary expedient, although the law of evolution be made to include man's mental life as well as his physical nature. For the conception of an abiding order, behind the flux of evolution, puts the whole relation of God to His universe in another light. The law of evolution must then be in some sense subordinate. Questions concerning the ultimate nature of that which evolves are more fundamental. Underlying those problems there is the still more fundamental issue, What is the ground whereon evolution appeared? The attempt to answer this question might lead one to an entirely different approach to the conception of God.

Moreover, the great minds have given up trying

to "prove" the existence of God. Such an attempt simply reveals the extreme limitations of finite thought. God is logically prior to all attempts to prove that He exists. He is historically prior to all discoveries in regard to His power, life, or causality. The universal evidence of belief in a Supreme Being as a living presence is far more conclusive than any argument, whether deductive or inductive. The consciousness, the experience commonly said to reveal the divine presence greatly exceeds the best report that is made of it. A poetic or suggestive account puts all logical arguments to shame. If we are ever to transcend anthropomorphism, we must make many allowances for the feeling factor, the immediacy. Arguments from the evidences of design in nature satisfy only while we regard life from a very limited point of view. God is far more than the "cause" of the world, else He could not be its cause. Nature is far more than an "effect." The category of causation is of minor importance.

It is well, however, to note that the argument from design fails because it is inadequate, not because it may not be in a measure true. When men set forth what they deem the divine "plan" they usually have in mind certain conclusions which they have read into nature and into human history. That is, after an event has happened,

men very easily say that just that occurrence was "designed" to happen precisely when and as it did. Had we more wisdom, we might read something entirely different into our lives. Had we more insight still, we would be more likely to follow our superiors in wisdom up what Emerson calls "the stairway of surprise," patiently waiting to see where that stairway leads. Time was when men ventured to reveal all the creative secrets of God, even to describe the topography of His attributes. Nowadays, men are becoming too wise to hazard a guess at what life is for, except so far as they find within themselves a certain power to live it, and to describe that life for the benefit of the race.

Another clear-cut conception of unity was that delectable sundering of society into two groups, "the elect" and "the damned." It was easy to posit predestination when it happened to be the other man who was condemned to seethe and boil. Probably the idea of a hell as neatly unified the world for those who found themselves relegated to it. It was easy for the Greeks to parcel off the world into citizens of their particular state, on the one hand, while all other tribes were classified as "barbarians." The words sound glibly on our tongues by which we speak of a large part of the world as "heathen" and the rest as "Christian." It is equally pleasant to classify

certain books as "profane," one book as revealed. All this passes as unity until it occurs to us how terrible is our offence when we characterise the life of God with any of His people as "profane," when we recollect that every human being owns God as Father. The shock is great, sometimes, whereby men are aroused into larger ways of thinking. They see that by their aristocratic belief in sin, evil, and the devil—for other people—they have impeached God. They learn at last that each soul counts for one only, and that the true unity of the race includes every member of it in one entirely liberal "City of God."

Popular optimism is another lightsome approach to belief in unity. Yet those who have sunk into the depths of pessimism, then have emerged into the conviction that the world may be made better, seem to possess profounder knowledge of life's unity—an ideal unity for which each of us may and should heartily strive. The most satisfactory conception of unity must obviously have room for both the abiding and the changing, both the striving and the goal. If we are continually upset in our supposed security it is only because our hold upon unity was only an incident by the way. Most of us are compelled to supplement our theory of unity by a large addition of faith. As matter of fact, what we mean by unity is simply this: our present outlook upon

the world from the point of view of faith. Even scientific men are beginning to confess that the scientific concept of the unity of nature is at best a device of our subjective consciousness, a short-hand account of our sensations.[1]

To turn from our Western way of thinking about nature as the field of "design," system, order, to the prevailing Hindoo point of view, is to find that millions of people are satisfied with a way of thinking which flatly contradicts our own. To put nature under the ban of *maya* that is, the veil of man's limitations and misapprehensions, seems to us to condemn nature unheard. Yet the Hindoo seers have found riches in the world of contemplation—shut out from all that we call most important—which are wholly unknown to the practical citizen of our Western world. It is not for us to condemn the reports of these mystical visions until we have sympathetically experimented in the same field. To think one's self into the Buddhistic world, with its theory of "Karma" and "Nirvana," its psychology without a soul, and its wheel of life, with no "real" that abides, seems to us to turn away from all that is rational. Yet, consider the beauty of conduct which the Buddha associated with his reactionary metaphysics; remember the priestcraft which he revolted from, and you will

[1] See Pearson's *Grammar of Science*.

see how shortsighted is that criticism of his type of unity which emphasises its negative side.

We are inclined to take the freedom of the will for granted, or at least we accept some form of freedom as essential to faith in the moral order. But it is instructive to turn from this mode of thought to the world of Mohammedan fatalism, and try to understand the kind of unitary belief which that conception implies. Again, to believe with the Buddhist, in "Karma," is to hold to a hard-and-fast scheme of things where there is said to be not a single deed which does not exactly conform to the law of cause and effect, a law which not only binds us, but which exemplifies the fruits of our conduct. No conception more easily aids the mind to rise to the thought of unity than the idea of law, natural or moral; yet none more quickly suggests our bondage to a kind of imprisoning fate. But nearly every way of thinking upon this basis has its exceptions. The theosophist who assures us that we are bound by the law of "Karma" immediately qualifies his statement by promising that when the soul learns the truth concerning the "wheel of life," it thereby becomes free from the law of rebirth, with its attendant "Karma." To find the ultimate theosophical unity of things, we must then look beyond the law of karmic cause and effect. The Christian believes that man will some time be a

"law unto himself." Some of the great German philosophers taught that in this world of experience man is bound, yet in the transcendental world he is free. The ultimate unity, therefore, lies far beyond the domain of natural law.

The ordinary ethical way of regarding human life as essentially a moral experience seems to be an easy method of attaining the idea of unity, and many ethical philosophers are thoroughgoing monists. But what shall we say of nature in its premoral forms? If the moral ideal be a predetermined unity, there is no ground for morality at all; for the existence of alternatives, the liberty either to sin or to be righteous, is a necessary condition. If each of us has the possibility of moral action, then the so-called moral order is in some respects potential; it is a collection of individuals, not a unit. It is obviously necessary to distinguish between the possibility of that which *is*, and the ideal unity of that which *ought to be*. The belief in unity means that the cosmos is ultimately congruous with the moral ideal; our God is a God of righteousness, and the world of human society has the ideal possibility of becoming in very truth the moral republic of God. In other words, both freedom and righteousness are such large terms that we must take both present and future conduct into account, the actual and the ideal, the plurality of potentially

moral individuals and the God whose constant guidance "makes for righteousness." Moral unity is thus an ideal yet to be attained. It would be robbing ethics of its meaning to declare that the world is a unity now.

The assumption that all men are perfect now is perhaps the most indolent way of attaining unity, for it at once robs human life of much of its value. If we are perfect now, it is plainly useless to try to become any better; the world is in a static condition and has no reason for being, since existence adds nothing. We ought, then, to declare that the idea of progress is an absolute illusion, the entire world of error, sin, and evil is illusion; we are simply waking up to the fact that we were utterly deceived, and have never really overcome anything.

Almost as indolent is the theory that our experience is merely an evolution of that which was long ago involved. For the real value of life consists in achievements whereby each of us adds somewhat. If we are merely unfolding we are only machines, mechanical puppets for the amusement of some *blasé* god. Such a theory is entirely in conflict with what we know about life, namely, that it is the domain of experiment, heroic struggle, and achievement. When we really consider it, this idea proves to be as barren as the idea of a goody-goody heaven where there

is nothing to do except to walk about on the golden streets and sing psalms.

Far more acceptable are the little worlds which book after book creates for us, the realms of contemplation and feeling to which we are admitted by great poems, symphonies, pictures, and other products of fine art. Awed by the complexities of life, the average man adopts a practical conception of unity which alters day by day as experience demands. It is only now and then that we become dogmatic and assert that our particular creed unifies the world. Yet it is easy, when we do generalise, to fall into the illusion that our particular conception of unity is the truth of truths, not a private working hypothesis. We forget that there are millions of people on the earth who hold no such view, that we count for one only, while each of these others may have found as direct a road to the heart of things. What we condemn as "materialism" may not be such to the one who holds it, for we are apt to judge by appearances and by terms. The rationalist who disparages all mystics as fanatics may be condemning one-half of life's reality; while the mystic who discounts reason may thereby defeat his entire object as a public teacher. The fatalist is not, strictly speaking, a fatalist; his conduct belies him. The pessimist believes in an order of things where pessimism plays no

part; otherwise he would not be a pessimist, for he could not condemn this world unless he knew a better. The sensationalist sees a wealth of reality in his chosen types of thought, or else he deserts his philosophy and adopts a practical point of view. One who is a philosophical materialist may be an ideal lover of his fellow-men, may be far more useful to society than a dozen transcendental idealists. It is probably true that no professed atheist ever was really an infidel. You must estimate a man's conduct as well as his theory to find out what his real unity is. The hidden sentiments of a man's life are most apt to show what he believes.

Religious creeds are usually the simplest formulas for the unity of the world. Religion is usually the resort when our conceptions are rudely upset by the unexpected. The higher the type of thought the more it tends toward unity, with the exception of a way of thinking which we shall consider later. But there is a unitary belief which is supposed to be a dreadful obstacle to this higher faith, namely, materialism. Yet no bugbear is more cowardly when we approach with confidence, none is more readily misinterpreted. The great conceptions of unity which we have to reckon with do not include materialism, but science in general, religion, man's practical attitude as expressed in common sense, and the

crowning science of human thought, constructive philosophy, the science which examines the presuppositions and compares the results of all other modes of thought. The great value of studying the types of unity is, therefore, to discover the various movements of human thought and learn their profoundest lessons. Hence it is important again and again to begin as far back as we can and note the vicissitudes of the unitary conceptions as they have been differentiated from man's first beliefs.

In the theological transitions of the nineteenth century we have an excellent illustration of the transition from unity to unity. When the philosophy of evolution was brought forward it seemed to many that the very structure of theology was threatened. For if evolution is the law of production, what place could a creator fill? The arguments for the unity of nature are so strong, as presented by scientific evolutionists, that there seems to be no room left for God. Yet long ago it was evident that the theory of evolution was simply one more unity added to our rich heritage. Just as Copernicus compelled the world of thought to adjust itself to the larger conception of our solar system, so the philosophy of evolution called for an enlargement. Little by little men began to see that there was the greater need of a God, on this hypothesis. The old idea

of a man-like Creator who finished His work in a week was only suited to man's slight knowledge of nature. Meanwhile that knowledge far outstripped theology, and when theology came to consciousness there was great zeal to enlarge its scope. It was only in the heat of controversy that theology seemed to be the loser. For scientific evolutionism applies, as we have already noted, to certain phases of the universe only. The entire universe could not have been an evolution, with nothing to start with, no primeval force, life, or substance. Science believes in that other great unity, the law of the conservation of energy, even more than in the law of evolution. Whatever changes have come about in the physical universe, and whatever may result in the future, science assures us that the sum total of energy remains eternally the same. The law of change is subordinate to the law of conservation. The question still remains, What is that force, or life, out of whose activities all changes have come? What is eternal reality? What abides? For only when we pass beyond the thought of growth, change, and decay, do we reach the conception of that unity of unities without which our world-system could not be.

There are other considerations which show how foolish were men's fears, when the theory of evolution seemed to threaten his belief in higher

things. For even if evolution were the one great law, it would not prove itself such till every department in life had been explained. As matter of fact, evolution has thus far proved inadequate to account for that which it ought, first of all, to explain in order to justify its universality. That is, the origin of life is not accounted for; the transition from the inorganic to the organic kingdoms is still a mystery; and, most important of all, the origin of consciousness is unexplained—the presence of mind is an enigma. The truth, then, is that, granted the existence of an ultimate life, eternally conserved; granted "habit-forming tendencies," factors to explain the great transitions from kingdom to kingdom, and, granted mind, evolution works very well. That is, evolution works *within* nature, on the one hand, and *within* consciousness, on the other. But when it is a question of the relationship of matter and life, of mind and brain, evolution falls back helpless.

Thus, human thought expands as rapidly as great men propose new types of unity for assimilation. There is momentary disturbance, then the new idea finds its place, and still there is room for larger generalisations. It is not improbable that science will be called upon to readjust all its theories in accordance with the discoveries of psychic research. F. W. H. Myers's theory of the subliminal region may be the connecting link

which will enable science to account for mysterious variations in human consciousness. But the mere suggestion of such a thing would now be ridiculed—so long does it take to learn the lesson of past readjustments. Such theories are usually branded "unscientific," and at once rejected. Yet it was by the same painstaking method of exact research which distinguishes modern science, that Mr. Myers gradually developed the profound hypotheses of his great work on human personality.

It is sometimes argued that even telepathy is impossible, since it is inconsistent with what is known about the universe. Again, it is said that if mind affects matter in the least degree, or if matter influences mind, the law of conservation of energy is broken. But what if the law of conservation be an inadequate hypothesis, if limited to the physical world? There may be a larger unity of world-life which contains both physical force and mental activity. If we stop at the alleged chasm between mind and matter, our theory is still dualistic. Since mind and matter both exist in the same universe, there is obviously a greater unity which holds them both, and it is this world-unity which ultimately concerns us. The conception of the parallelism of mind and matter is a useful working hypothesis, but it is well to remember that it is an hypothesis.

There is, of course, great value in a relative conception of unity such as the scientific law of the conservation of physical energy. But it is still a conception simply, an hypothesis devised to account for one domain of human experience. The great men of science are free to confess that even evolution is a working conception. All scientific unities are subject to modification in the light of further knowledge; they are not understood to be absolute laws.

Yet, despite the fact that the point of view of evolution may not be universally adequate, it is important to remind ourselves how greatly the modern doctrine of evolution has enlarged our horizon. Formerly, the entire universe was held to be a finished product, while human souls, if not actually rated among the elect or the rejected, were supposed to be granted very meagre opportunities of regeneration, ere they entered a heaven or a hell where there was apparently to be no progress. Scientific accounts of evolution have now accustomed the mind to contemplate vast æons of growth. Ten thousand years are but as a day, as men once reckoned time. No one now undertakes to limit human history except in a very general way. It is but a step from the past history of the earth to a conception of a vast future to which we may look forward as an indissoluble part of the present.

Opportunity is conceivably coextensive with time: opportunity is but another word for salvation. Thus the old fear passes over insensibly into a new trust, and anxiety gives place to equanimity. Zeal for future security from torment gives place to joy at the blessing of life as it passes. The old doctrine was founded on the necessity of immediate salvation, the new is inspired by faith in the everlasting integrity of things. Formerly, existence here was viewed as a fragment cut off from a boundless abyss of mystery in the past, separated from an uncertain eternity in the future. Now, life is viewed as a whole of which each day is an inseparable part. Life "here below" now flows: once it was a relentless measuring-rod to test men's fitness to pass beyond it. The old order was dualism,—God and the devil at strife. The new is inspired by belief in a progressively attained unity.

Other believers in what is sometimes called "the higher philosophy of evolution" go farther and announce a new optimism. Whatever comes, so the advocate of this larger faith maintains, all calamities and hardships are advance agents of love. There may be many asides and counteractivities, but there is in truth no adversary. Evil and woe we have with us still, but they have changed their temper. Once we went forth as children. Now we go forth as men, confident of

victory. There is not the slightest excuse for inaction, but it is action of another sort. There is no reason why we should get down in the dust and push, as if the universe might not arrive in time. There is no time-card in God's universe. We can now afford to enjoy the scenery of the present moment, well assured that the landscape around the bend will still be there when our life-train arrives. There is a universal tide, pulsing, throbbing, pulsing, ever flowing forward, and on and on. That tide bears everything on its bosom; that stream is the stream of atom and of star, the pulse-beat of the Almighty. Infinite are the rills and whirls and eddies which checker its swelling tide. Numberless are the byplays of its passengers. A man may rage and tear and buffet it. He may idly float with its silent rhythms. Or his strong arms may carry him onward with its harmonious motion. But on he must go. Free, he is yet fated; fated only to be free. You may with the rebellious one, count life a warfare or with the apathetic deem it a bore. You may complain of its tantalising mystery, or rejoice with him who conquers. But the reality of realities you shall not see until you, too, move with and for the current.

Yet what numbers of profoundly thoughtful people there are in these days who either have not caught the spirit of this new optimism, or who

still prefer to remain agnostics! This agnosticism is apt to pass, however, into dogmatism with the declaration that our knowledge is hopelessly relative, that reality is "unknowable"—what a strange word to apply to that which we know so much about! The unity of religion has been broken into, and in their doubt many good people have drifted from the churches into sects of greatly inferior persuasion. The liberalising movement of the nineteenth century has done its work and grown weary of its "pale negations." We are all heartily tired of negative critiques, yet how shall we transcend them? What shall reestablish centrality? What can be done to counteract the zeal for specialisation whereby modern knowledge is collected and catalogued faster than it can be unified?

CHAPTER II

RECENT TENDENCIES

IF we examine the tendencies of thought which mark the transition from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, we find three striking characteristics: the decay of faith in authoritative theology, the heightened development of physical science, and the growth of empirical or practical philosophy. The first tendency has long been viewed with alarm by devotees of religion. The unprecedented success of physical science has seemed to make for materialism, hence, to render the progress of religion the more difficult. The third tendency is often taken to be an indication of degeneracy. Thus, many have found it difficult either to retain their faith or tell whither our transition age is tending.

Now, it would be an enormous assumption for one man to claim that he could read all the signs of the times. It would be equally preposterous for him to undertake to unify the many diverse contributions of thought in an age of rapid multiplication of special sciences. The larger faith

of the growing century will be the work of many minds of contrasted points of view. That faith must reach a certain degree of maturity before it can be unified. The process is the same in one's own thinking. The intuition which unifies comes long after the analysis which sunders and the self-conscious logic that fails. Yet it is possible even while one is immersed in the process to see whither some of the lines of growth are tending. If one can but show that what seemed to be degeneration really is growth, one has accomplished something. Let us, then, try to interpret some of the signs of the times, with the understanding that even those signs are shifting while we study them, yet shifting to more and more promising fields.

For example, take the rapid division and subdivision of modern science, the unprecedented increase of knowledge beyond the capacity of great men to take account of it. Is it really cause for regret that we have few great men who stand out prominently above their fellows? Is the tendency toward specialisation to be deplored? Despite this tendency, the sum of unified knowledge is infinitely greater. There are many thousand times as many people who are skilled in science and literature as there were in the days when one man might know practically all that was worth knowing in his age. If no one genius can now lift himself prominently above the crowd, it may be

because a thousand seers are about to co-operate to declare the greater revelation of our more social life. If we have fewer great poets and other men of universal genius, it may be because a yet greater truth is about to find expression through many minds, whose common message we shall presently understand—when we know the basis on which they are working. With the growth of trusts, socialisms, and other plans of unification, political and social problems multiply faster than any one thinker can take account of them. But this very complexity bears within it the seeds of its own simplification, and we shall presently discern its meaning.

Nothing is easier than to misunderstand, and no doctrine is more ignorantly put aside than materialism. The critics are usually those who have been subject to materialism in some form, and are at last free; and when a man is free the mere mention of his former burden is enough to call forth a torrent of abuse. At the least indication that an idea or a scheme is the work of his old foe, he is on the alert. When the critic of materialism has once labelled the new idea or scheme, that, of course, settles it: it is "materialism," and there is nothing more to say. A little discriminative thinking would have shown him that no conclusion is more superficial; that a man is not really free from a thing until he has understood it.

To understand materialism, it is necessary to understand the reactions of the age. For many centuries man lived under the lash of dogmatic theology. He has been told, until he is tired of the very words, that he must save his soul and prepare for the future life. During the Middle Ages, he even believed that the body was evil; and there was but little in this beautiful world that was not condemned. Luther and his contemporaries won for man the right to reason, and after a time men of learning began to rediscover nature,—though a few isolated men, like Galileo, had already prepared the way by catching occasional glimpses of her wondrous beauty through Renaissance rifts in the theological clouds. Nature once more discovered, it was possible for man to rest for a time in his theological exercise, and take comfort in his body. Then came Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, and the rest, and the field was free. That scientific materialism should flourish for a while as never before was perfectly natural. Materialism had its first free opportunity to gather the scattered treasures of physical science which had never been unified since the days of the Greek atomists.

Philosophically, materialism arose rather late in human history, and had a shorter life than many systems. To be sure, one of the many Hindoo systems of philosophy was materialistic, but

materialism could make little headway in the land of contemplation and spiritual pantheism. Not until the days of exact thought in ancient Greece did materialism really become a candidate for world-philosophy. Even then it had small recognition, and it was more than a thousand years before it became very prominent. The climax of its power came in the eighteenth century.[1] The rise of the philosophy of evolution gave the materialists new hope, but that hope was short-lived. By the middle of the nineteenth century scientific men began to be too wise to be materialists, and the only alternative for those who could not accept idealism was to become agnostics. Huxley summed up the changed attitude when he declared that he was not a materialist because he found himself "utterly incapable of conceiving the existence of matter if there is no mind in which to picture that existence." [2]

The great men of science to-day are not materialists. They are specialists whose particular assumptions and conclusions must be philosophically re-examined before their place in relation to what is real can be known. Those who declare that science is materialistic because the devotees of its various branches talk only of atoms, forces,

[1] See Lange's great work in three volumes, *The History of Materialism.*

[2] *Methods and Results*, p. 245.

masses, or other things, simply fail to understand. The tendency is towards a unitary conception of the cosmos whose one life must be sought beyond the mere presentations of sense.

Nowadays [says Ward][1] there is nothing science resents more indignantly than the imputation of materialism. For, after all, materialism is a philosophical dogma—it professes to start from the beginning, which science can never do, and, when it is true to itself, never attempts to do. Modern science is contented to ascertain co-existences and successions between facts of mind and facts of body.

Let us illustrate by the much-misunderstood physiological psychology of the day. It is easy to condemn it as materialistic, and go on one's way rejoicing in the superiority of one's spiritual knowledge. But this psychology does not pretend to be complete, any more than chemistry is a complete theory of the universe. It has a very limited purpose, namely, to learn all that can be known about the mind from *one logically defined point of view*, namely, when the mind is studied in connection with brain states.[2] Enough has been learned already to justify all the time and labour. If hard-and-fast limits shall some time be discovered, spiritual psychology will immensely

[1] *Naturalism and Agnosticism.*

[2] See Münsterberg's *Psychology and Life.*

profit thereby. At the lowest estimate, our knowledge of a human being will be greatly increased. Let the work go on, then. The psychologists are endeavouring to make of psychology a special empirical science in which one may study conscious states as such, without regard to values, or ultimates. The same man who is a physiological psychologist is also a human being, and if you follow him through his day you will find that there is much to him besides his psychology. He may, for example, very frankly tell you that all questions of worth or value must be referred to ethics or to philosophy in general. He is far from measuring the world by his special science. Likewise with many other scientific men classified as materialists. To know what they believe as men is to have this superficial judgment entirely removed.

For example, Professor Münsterberg, of Harvard, would naturally be singled out as the most materialistic of these new psychologists. But it happens that philosophically Professor Münsterberg is an idealist of the Fichtean type. That is, he believes that the results of his special science must, like the data of any other science, be philosophically reconsidered and described in terms of the self. This alleged archbishop of materialism, then, holds that the true view of life is the reverse of the materialism with which he is credited.

Again, take the popular materialism of the day. In the truest sense it is the glad joy of man in unhampered existence in the physical world. When one considers the bondage which he has thrown off, it is plain that, on the whole, man has behaved very well. It is the first time in what is called Christian civilisation that he has had liberty to study and develop the resources of the visible world. He is now trying the materialistic hypothesis to see what there is in it. Stand aside and see what he will do, how far he will go. If he is a bit extreme for a time, never mind; the only way to know that it is an extreme is to try it. This is the age of scientific invention, discovery, and development. Man is now building the foundations broad and deep for a larger, higher life. I make bold to say that there is more that is sound, rational, enduring, yes, spiritual, in this kind of thought and life than in any of the ages when man has condemned matter and tried to make himself spiritual by asceticism and other exclusive methods. Amidst all this commercialism and love of luxury there is more that is sound and sweet than in any age of the world. There have been greater seers than any now living. There have been little groups of more spiritual people, but never such a general diffusion of sound sense, of rational belief in law, order, justice, peace, the unity of life. The present-day scientific man who

claims to know nothing about God knows more about Him than the theologian of the past, who thought he knew God well enough to catalogue the divine virtues. To be sure, there are some who are greater materialists to-day, because there is greater acquaintance with matter,—for example, many exponents of medical science. There are those whose noses and eyes are buried in matter, and who see naught else. But these are few. The general trend of the age is far different.

This is, of course, no argument for materialism in its debasing forms. There are tendencies in our age which are naturally observed with deep concern. But the present play on the stage is the drama of physical life. When the crowd is tired of the play there will be a change, and, note this, when this play has had its run we shall *know something*. It is no half-way affair, this time. We are really in earnest to find out what there is in the visible universe. We may say unqualifiedly that until man had tried the experiment he never would have been satisfied. If, later, he turns to the invisible world with new zest, it will be to hold fast as never in the history of the world. At any rate we must pass through the period and have done with it. It is barely possible that by having the experience we shall learn so much that many of our views of the invisible will be greatly broadened.

Many of the materialistic tendencies of the time which we deplore will run themselves out in due course. We can well afford to let this transition period show what it is to lead to before we cry out that human nature is degenerating, or that the great social problems are past solution. The fact that religion is seeking new forms of expression is not alarming to those who value the spirit rather than the letter. The bare negations of agnosticism do not long satisfy either the scientist or the man of religion. The age demands the truth which the negations hide, and many labourers are earnestly working in the constructive field to meet just this demand.

Many substitutes have been offered for old faiths, but they have been mostly ephemeral and extreme reactions from outworn creeds; and reactions do not long meet human needs. There has been an outbreak of fads and catchpenny schemes. But the fact that these schemes have won temporary acceptance simply shows that the people are restless. The old dogmas have been brought out, dusted, and repainted. But the veneer was so thin that only the unprogressive were held by the device. We have had cries of "Back to Nature!" "Back to Kant!" "Back to Christ!" Yet no mere return to any faith or any person will suffice. When people begin to doubt, the only resource is to resolve the doubts. If

history reappears in a new light, well and good. But we must first have the light.

The profound interest in thoroughgoing philosophy which so many manifest in our day is undoubtedly the most direct evidence of the pathway to unity. The special sciences leave our knowledge in fragmentary shape only because their presuppositions have not been searchingly examined. Agnosticism has held sway only while men paused by the roadside. Behind even the most negative critiques there is a wealth of positive wisdom which a profounder analysis would reveal. If our sense of unity has been disturbed, it is because we are called upon to assimilate this profounder wisdom. It was first necessary to criticise the old beliefs in order to get things in motion. But close upon the heels of the retreating scepticism of our transition age a new conviction is coming. The optimism of the "higher philosophy of evolution" already expresses this conviction in part.

Another indication that a larger faith is taking shape is the gradual transition of Christian thought from the old theological basis to a philosophical foundation akin to transcendental idealism. Typical of this kind of thinking is *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*,[1] by Principal Fairbairn, of Mansfield College, Oxford. A

[1] New York: The Macmillan Co., 1902.

brief outline of the book will give a clue to this transitional thinking.

Instead of starting with an abstract premise in the ancient fashion, the author starts with nature, and asks whether nature is self-explanatory. Naturally he finds it necessary to look beyond the physical world to find a basis for nature, for man, and for the personality of Christ. This basis he finds not in the supernatural world in the old sense, but in the transcendental world of God, the eternal reality whose power is the immanent life of the great universe which reveals Him. In nature and man he finds reason, order, signs of intelligence. The energy of nature is the correlate of freedom in man. Man is the interpreter of nature. Since both nature and man are rational, there must be one rational constitution in each, one intelligence in both. The noumenal, then, not the phenomenal, explains man. Evolution is not self-explanatory; it does not account for the appearance of mind. Nature cannot be conceived apart from ultimate reality. But, once in possession of a philosophical basis of that which lies beyond the merely natural, why may we not find room for a higher Person, the Saviour of men?

In the same way, the author pleads for a larger interpretation of history. To the historical argument, he adds the argument from ethics, the problem of evil, the philosophy of religion; and

the great fact that man is a religious being,—that no theory can account for him which leaves his religious nature out of account.

The second book is an elaborate consideration of the personality of Christ, the relation of Judaism to Christianity, the results of the higher criticism, the contributions of the apostolic writings to the Christ idea, and the gradual development of this idea. The Christian religion was not built on Jesus of Nazareth, but upon the idea that he was the Christ, the Son of God. It is the understanding of what lies within this idea which explains the unparalleled fact of the Christian religion. It was the power of the Person, not merely what he said and did. The cross was essential to that idea, yet it was the being who passed through the crucifixion from whom the great power was sent out into the world.

The Unitarian might complain that the author occupies a compromise position; that it will require another fifty years for writers of this stamp to be completely emancipated from the old theology. But one is inclined rather to credit the volume for what it is as a fine piece of transitional thinking. Other critics might say that a fully worked-out philosophy must more carefully consider the question, What is reality? and must defend itself against the attacks of pantheism and other mystical doctrines. But this criticism has

been exceptionally well done in another noteworthy work, which is far more indicative of the tendencies of the times.

Without doubt the most important philosophical work issued in recent years is *The World and the Individual*,[1] by Professor Josiah Royce. The general purpose of this great work is the development of a theory of first principles as the basis of a philosophy of religion. The first series is devoted to the doctrine of reality, the second is concerned with the relationships of God and man, man and nature, the meaning of evil, and the nature of the moral order. In the first series there is a critical and historical examination of the leading types of theories of reality, while the second is largely devoted to the more detailed exposition of Professor Royce's particular views. Realism and mysticism have perhaps never received more searching criticism. The positive results of these doctrines are carried over into what Professor Royce calls "the fourth conception of Being," a form of constructive idealism which, profiting by the exercises of post-Kantian thought, finds a method of assimilating the more rational results of the foregoing conceptions.

The theory in general is through and through teleological. The temporal world is, from first to last, a world of purposes. Time is the form of the

[1] New York: Macmillan Company, 2 vols., 1899 and 1900.

will. Nature is so far real as it fulfils a purpose. For the Absolute this purpose is at once one and many: one, as the eternal, unitary basis of all existence; many, as at once the temporal working out of the eternal unity and the varied wills of finite individuals. The finite self is at once determined and free—determined in so far as organically related to other selves and to the Absolute, as a moral individual; and free in the strictly ethical sense, as a temporal agent reacting upon the diversified presentations to which the will gives attention. The unity of the one and the many is thus a unity of wills. What is incomplete in the temporal order is fulfilled in the eternal. Sin is due to ignorance of our true selfhood, and evil is finally overcome by good. The doctrine is thus essentially different from mysticism, since nature is purposive: it is not pantheistic, since it finds room for genuine finite selves, and goes far toward meeting the demands of pluralism, while not sacrificing the unity of the whole.

The criticism which this work has received shows that the theory is still incomplete. The present reference to it should not by any means be taken as an endorsement of all it contains, leastwise of its theory of the Absolute, and its negative critique of mysticism. But it is one of the signs of the times; and the great interest which it has aroused is one more evidence that it is construct-

ive idealism, thoroughgoing philosophy, which is to furnish the true basis of unity of modern thought.

Of great consequence, too, is the tendency toward empirical philosophy under the leadership of Prof. William James, one of the most influential thinkers of our day. If ever there was a disturber of the unities of thought in which dogmatism serenely takes refuge, it is this champion of the facts that are left over after the system-makers have done their work, Few books have done so much to call attention to the neglected factors of life and thought as *The Will to Believe*. Professor James even dares to question the monistic hypothesis itself. He is far more interested in fidelity to life, with all its heights and depths, than in the consistent carrying out of some pet logical hypothesis which may perchance leave half the world unexplained. To some his strictures might seem even more negative than agnosticism itself. Professor James has nowhere worked out his empiricism into a connected system. But underneath the apparent negations one detects a belief in the unity of experience which is of profound practical significance.

In the works of such men the practical tendency of our age unites with the endeavour to develop a philosophy of pure experience. It is precisely this new empiricism which is rising to meet the

demands for a new spiritual awakening. It is living experience which supplies the lack which speculative philosophy feels. The appeal to practical experience is coming to be regarded as the final test of the validity of the larger philosophy to which the constructive idealists are now giving shape.

The demand that philosophy shall be practical, concrete, social, religious, is thus the profoundest demand of our age. This empirical demand is the surest sign of all that philosophy is again turning into constructive pathways. "Back to Experience!" is therefore the most promising of these modern cries. *Reality still exists.* God still lives. Life is still before us. We know not what wealth of experience may yet come. Life is truly worth living; there is really something to strive for, something to add to the great totality. Therefore reverence your present experience, be true to all the demands of instinct, reason, faith, and at the same time respect the lessons of history. If philosophy have not yet discovered the true unity, it is only because the wealth of individualisms is too great to encompass.

In the light of the new demands of the age, we may therefore say: If it be your purpose to interpret life, you must study and describe actual life as it is, as immediately presented; not begin with a logical fragment as your abstract premise, then

deny the rest admittance because it is not logical. If nature is a part of a world-order which includes mind and the moral life as only in part realised in this physical existence, you should not expect to understand nature alone. If man is really an immortal soul, even now dwelling in eternity, you ought to take his spiritual character into account, not complain that as a physical organism he is unintelligible. The way to end with God is to begin with Him. Our premises must be as large as our conclusions. We should not expect God to break in somewhere into our logical abstractions, nor find the soul hidden away in the meshes of the brain. The problem of evil will be a mystery to the end if we continue to look in the darkness for a solution. The "heathen" will always be condemned as heathen until we start with the premise that every human being is a son of God in the kingdom of infinite love.

One might say that what the world most needs at present is to brush away all abstractions, and return to the sources of things until it is once more fired by the presence of the divine, until it knows for a fact that God lives; then be true to that fact, live for that fact, realise that the divine order *is*, exists,—not merely seems to be. It is not so much "reasons for believing" that we need as that type of conduct which accompanies thrilling belief, stirring consciousness of the divine. The

world needs science; it needs education, thought, thoroughgoing philosophy, not mere dabbling in the metaphysical realm. But it needs the Spirit even more than it needs downright thinking.

We are absorbed in forms: let us have the Spirit itself. Therefore, when you read the imperfect terms of a philosophical book, remember the broadly spiritual ideal. Instead of singling out its defects and publishing them, set a new fashion and begin to be constructive; supply in your conduct what the book lacks. One must be tremendously in earnest to know life. One must courageously persist to the end. The science of truth is inseparable from the art of life, and one can no more float easily into the harbour of wisdom than one can know what love is by delegating some one to love in one's stead.

Let philosophy become religion once more. Let religion be purged by philosophy. Let us begin work at last. We have scarcely reached the age of reason. We live in bits, in schemes, devices, and shadows, which we mistake for wholes and realities. Let us come out into the broad sunlight and be men. A man is an organic assemblage, and must be poet, philosopher, lover, and much else, all in one. The highest life is many-sided. We must adore it from many points of view. We must be beautiful in order truly to adore. Therefore, let us begin to live.

It is usual for philosophical discussions to begin with a lengthy argument for an abstract logical premise or with certain cardinal facts in the physical world. If we ought rather to begin with experience in its presented fulness we should plunge into the study of life where our own liveliest interests inspire us. These interests are apt to be religious or practical rather than logical. It is our higher nature which we wish to understand and preserve. We are not content with a soul which is condemned at the outset; with a God who is mentioned by way of apology at the close. It is time, then, to protest against that procedure which starts with the lower order of life, and ends by confessing that it finds no need of anything higher, or finds the lower itself a mystery. The procedure ought rather to be the reverse. The lower is only intelligible in the light of the higher. The attainments, not its physical conditions and origins, are the clues to evolution. The full-grown tree explains the seed, not the seed the tree. If our theory of nature's unity is broken into by what is sometimes called "the supernatural," we must reconstruct our concept so as to provide for the supernatural. If man is a spiritual being, a son of God, here and now, it is futile to try to understand him in purely physiological terms. Moreover, if he be an immortal soul, man ought to act as a soul, as a son of God, not as a creature

of flesh and blood. Thus, practically and philosophically, the true clue to unity seems to be an entirely different method from that pursued by modern science. Science has tried to explain men by studying origins, the low levels of organic evolution. But more important than the question of origins is the problem of values, ends. To start with nature as a mechanical, self-evolving order is to end with the lower or mechanical unity. The origin of life and the presence of consciousness will always be mysteries until, beginning with man as a conscious being and with the universe as a living organism, we explain the mechanical by the biological, the biological by the conscious, and the human by the divine.

Thus the meaning of the present disturbance in the world of thought is the wresting of interest away from the mechanical and putting it upon the divine. Our age is witnessing a new movement towards belief in the higher order of things. We are learning anew that we are living souls. We are turning from abstract theology to the concrete God. And in this vitally absorbing, progressive present we are once more finding the pathway to the Spirit, the clue to the meaning of life.

CHAPTER III

A NEW STUDY OF RELIGION

THE works of no living writer more sharply challenge criticism, and at the same time arouse admiration and zeal for intellectual growth, than the writings of Professor James, of Harvard University. For he is rather the critic of all points of view than the adherent of any one school. He is at once psychologist, preacher, friend, sceptic, and believer, ready to champion any new cause, yet admirably conservative when asked for an avowal of opinion. One is sure to agree with him at many points, but as sure to find him unsatisfactory in other respects. He is ever in pursuit of a larger theory, ever emphasising possibilities of which the ordinary man does not dream. It was to be expected that when such a man took up the study of religion he would have something strikingly original to say. It is safe to predict for his recently published Gifford Lectures,[1] delivered at Edinburgh University, 1901–1902, a popular-

[1] *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, 534 pp. $3.20. Longmans, Green & Co., 1902.

ity which will greatly stimulate interest in religion, and help to bring about the much-looked-for revival.

Instead of starting with an abstract premise in regard to the perfection of the divine nature, or indulging in abstruse reasoning with the intent to prove something, Professor James begins with real life. Believing that life comes before theory, he permits life as far as possible to speak for itself, and reserves his comments for the last. He has collected a large number of original documents, besides ranging through the entire literature of the Christian ages. To a large extent he considers the extreme types of religious life, well assured that if he gives place to the extremes all else will be included. The result is a mass of evidence in favour of religion which might well serve as a mine of wealth for religious teachers. It is seldom that the spiritual life is so effectively made to speak for itself.

In the first place, the ground is cleared by sweeping away medical materialism, which discounts religion by describing the disordered physical condition of religious people. It is just such temperaments which Professor James finds to be the most striking cases of religion. To describe the pathological condition is one thing, to evaluate the spiritual experience associated with it is quite another. Paul's vision on the road to

Damascus may have been a "discharging lesion of the occipital cortex," St. Teresa may have been an hysteric, and St. Francis an hereditary degenerate; but that throws no light on the religious worth of their lives; that does not disprove the value of the spiritual revelations of these saints. For all that medical materialism can tell us to the contrary, the neurotic temperament may be the instrument for the production and growth of religion. It is not a question of description of physiological states, not a question of origin, but of values and outcomes. "By their fruits ye shall know them." That which works best on the whole is to decide. Accordingly, Professor James devotes several chapters to the various states, fruits, and values of saintliness, and intersperses his analyses of asceticism and the like with delightful little sermons apropos of modern life.

Again, our author considers religion only in the personal sense. For him the real thing is the personal feeling, the individual deed, or reaction. Creeds, forms, institutions, are of secondary worth. The true religionist prays, puts love, passion into his life. His formulated statement comes afterward, and is frequently a lifeless crystallisation. There is no one religious essence, no specific or peculiar sentiment to which any given devotee can lay claim. This conclusion naturally leads

to a pronounced individualism. Professor James welcomes the religious life wherever he finds it. He is not a mere Christian, but professes fondness for Buddhistic doctrines, and does not believe in evangelical imperialism.

The broadest possible definition is given to religion, with the reservation that it shall mean something sacred and ennobling, a higher kind of happiness, belief in the presence of a spiritual order. That is, religion consists in individual feelings, acts, and experiences associated with whatever men deem the divine. It is belief in the reality of the unseen regarded as a higher order, and may be associated with a wide diversity of content. The objective presence may not be there precisely as man conceives it. But, generally speaking, there is some sort of solemnly emotional or other aspiring attitude connected with this belief. It is the vast variety of these personal associations which forms the subject-matter of the psychology of religion, and the search is for an hypothesis which shall account for the experience on its human side.

The first spiritual type considered is the religion of healthy-mindedness, that is, the optimistic type. Then follows "the sick soul," the conflict of selves, and an elaborate study of conversion, an analysis of saintliness, the limitations of saint-hood, the worth of mysticism and of rational

religion. In all these classes of experience, passed successively in review, the author finds value, authority, yet none is universal, none has commanded universal assent. The result is a powerful argument for open-minded many-sidedness. Even with all these types before us, it doth not yet appear what man shall be. There may be other modes of existence and other types of consciousness. Investigations like those of the Society for Psychical Research have opened a wide field of which we know but little as yet. One ought, therefore, to suspend judgment, to continue to accumulate data, and maintain the experimental attitude.

Professor James is not yet convinced of the reality of spirit-return, though he expresses great admiration for the work of Myers, Hodgson, and Hyslop. He believes, however, that it is through psychical-research channels that we are to find evidences of immortality. The possibilities are great, but the facts are few as yet. It is well to leave the question of immortality an open one, and concern ourselves with the more immediate application of Myers's hypothesis of the subliminal self. For it is this hypothesis which supplies the essential basis for the explanation of conversion and other religious phenomena. The application of this hypothesis is briefly as follows:

The study of mysticism and conversion shows

conclusively that there is a deep reality in these experiences for the subjects of them. Whatever the creed, and whatever the idea of God, there are evidently forces outside of the conscious individual which bring redemption into his life. Whether occurring suddenly, or as a slowly matured result, a changed life follows a spiritual awakening. The old interests wane, the conduct of life alters, and a life of devotion takes the place of the life of sin and selfishness. This process of regeneration is describable in mechanical terms as a change in the centre of equilibrium. The change of heart, the awakened centre of spiritual feeling, possesses dynamic power. God, or some other exalted person, may or may not correspond to the psychological state. The human fact is that the change of mind and heart occurs in response to an experience which stands for the divine. The attention is transferred from the old life with its interests, from selfishness and the rest, to a higher centre of interest. Around this new centre of mind and heart, corresponding changes in the general mode of conduct group themselves. The subconscious mental life also responds. In fact, the change is largely subconscious at first. For it is in this larger mental life, active below the threshold, that the soul lies open to the unseen order, belief in which is the very basis of religion.

Psychologically, this means that a person who

is religiously very impressionable possesses a large subliminal region. This subconscious field may open into the world of the divine, the realm of spirits, possibly spirit-return: its limits no one knows. The chief point is that Myers's theory of the subliminal self supplies the basis for a complete psychology of religion, a perfectly definite theory of conversion.

All the voices that are heard, the visions that are seen, and the uplifts of heart and will are directly or indirectly gifts of this larger world to which every soul lies open. From a person's subliminal self this larger world extends out on every hand to the unfathomed depths and unmeasured heights of eternity. Let us repeat: the voices may or may not be objectively real, spirits may or may not be present. But whatever the reality lying beyond, here at any rate, is the channel of communication. Here, too, psychology and religion are at one, for both admit the existence of a larger spiritual world. Professor James does not exclude one fact that it is dear to the religionist. The divine grace may be operative, supernatural experiences may occur, and all that is most precious to believers in the reality of sudden conversion. The author is not dogmatic at any point. He leaves room for the utmost freedom of opinion in regard to the nature of the Beyond. The point is that the whole experience is lifted from the

plane of the superstitious and the miraculous, and put on an exact scientific basis of psychological law. The subliminal field of consciousness is the centre of interest, and here many diverse thinkers may unite.

Professor James does not see why Methodists should object to such a view.

> Go back [he says] and recollect one of the conclusions to which I sought to lead you in my first lecture. . . . I there argued against the notion that the worth of a thing can be decided by its origin. Our spiritual judgment . . . must be decided on empirical grounds exclusively. If the fruits for life of the state of conversion are good, we ought to idealise and venerate it, even though it be a piece of natural psychology; if not, we ought to make short work of it, no matter what supernatural being may have infused it.[1]

Likewise with mysticism. The author confesses that he has not himself enjoyed the great cosmic uplifts wherein one feels "at one with all being," but he treats the records of the mystics most reverently, and assigns them a place as real facts. Yet despite the authority of these states, for those who enjoy them, they should be submitted to critical tests. They break down the authority of those who assume the universal

[1] P. 237.

superiority of reason; yet reason has an authority which is equally worthy of consideration, so that in the end feeling and thought must go hand in hand.

The philosophical portion of the book is left in unfinished shape, as the author prefers to reserve certain questions for a later volume. In a post-script he gives a brief summary of his religious opinions and leaves the reader to complete the rational doctrine of the book as best he may.

The point which is most likely to challenge criticism is more and more clearly emphasised as the discussion reaches its unfinished conclusion. Nearly all champions of religion are exponents of some form of unified faith, or monism, the point of view which sees the world as one piece. But Professor James is a pronounced pluralist, a believer not merely in the system of things, but in their disparateness, the separate existence of God, real finite souls, a real world, real moral freedom, and real evil.[1] The facts of the world are too many and too diverse to fit into any one scheme. There is no all-sufficient revelation, no single religion that embraces all truth. Some systems make too much of certain aspects of life: others ignore the most vital problems. We ought, then, to hold all facts side by side in solution, rather than give way to the passion for unity.

[1] See his *Will To Believe*, Preface.

And so with religious experience in particular. The optimist has his world, the pessimist has his. Both are true in a respect in which the other is blind, but both may be childlike as compared with those who have passed through the conflict of selves and been born again. There is no good reason to doubt that the mystic is in actual communion with his God. But what a vast array of conflicting formulas mystics have clothed their thought in, from the days of early Brahmanism, Sufism, and the mystics of the Middle Ages to the present time! There is no alternative but the comparative study of mysticism; no state of religious feeling is absolute, or authoritative, without interpretation. Yet the pretensions of philosophy are equally to be guarded against, for when the last word has been said rational experience is of relative value only. Finally, the claims of modern science that religion is merely a survival from superstitious times are equally shallow. Science tries to set up a sort of universal criterion: the consensus of the competent, a quasi-impersonal standard. But religion has been shown to be decidedly personal. When science has uttered her last word, the philosophical idealist can reply that there is nothing of which he is so sure as the existence of his personal consciousness. Thus science is unable to rob us of the basis and reality of religion.

The result is the opposite of that which pleases the proselyter. Where there is such a wealth of alternatives it is obviously impossible to persuade a man that your way is the best way, and that he must follow in your footsteps or be damned. There is the utmost room for variety of religious conduct. Individualism first, last, and always is the word. This conclusion is made all the more emphatic by the constant reminder that we do not yet know all, that there may be other types of experience awaiting us.

Obviously, the balance of power is transferred to the human side. The conditions of receptivity in the individual would seem to be the centre of interest. If one have a large subliminal region one would like to know it, and to train the mental powers for its growth into consciousness. One might even say that the training of the attention is the secret of the whole matter.

If, now, the critic declares that the author has never felt the real touch of religion, he will thereby confess that he has not read deeply in this book, which, despite its note of scepticism, has an inspiring overtone of reverence and worship. Professor James's profoundest word is that the best thing about us is our over-beliefs. He has his over-belief, and he poetically suggests it where dull prose would mar. This is not a book to be judged by the letter simply, but by the spirit.

Read deeply, it reveals the life of religion in a new light, of direct significance for one's personal as for one's public life. His scepticism refers rather to secondary matters: the essentials of religion remain untouched. While nothing is said about the specific beliefs of the Christian with regard to Jesus, one may add one's particular faith as an over-belief. Only the extreme breadth of view can perplex, while only the neglect of the central hypothesis is likely to leave the mind in a chaotic state.

Generally speaking, the book tends greatly to strengthen one's belief in the everlasting reality of religion. The reader's mind passes through many fluctuations, from belief to scepticism, and the concluding impression is not entirely satisfactory. But the book as a whole is a striking testimony to the universality of religion. Professor James is a kind of universal theist, a spiritual democrat. He welcomes religious experience in all forms and from all lands. He believes in God, yet he finds the theistic belief so rich that he thinks perhaps a multitude of gods is needed to meet the need of the vast variety of psychological states associated with the unseen. He is as unwilling to run all the gold into one mould as in his *Will to Believe*. He is empirical to the end. But it is only because the bits of experience are too numerous to constitute any one mosaic, and, after all,

Professor James does not care for mosaics: he wants a living totality large enough to hold all the elements. He intends to contest even the right of such profound treatises as *The World and the Individual*, by Professor Royce, to claim the whole truth. Therefore the fragmentary nature of his conclusions is an earnest of somewhat greater to follow.

When we turn, finally, to consider the notable points in this great book we emphasise first the author's insistence on the distinction between judgments of fact and judgments of value. His work is in large part an appeal to fact—the profoundly significant fact that religious devotees the world over believe in the existence of an unseen spiritual order. This "added dimension of emotion," the priority and superiority of the immediate spiritual experience, is the fundamental datum. The second great fact is the actual work wrought in the lives of those who put themselves in relation with the higher order. The higher order is no mere lifeless figment of a disordered imagination, but "spiritual energy flows in and produces effects." A new zest is added to life. There is an assurance of safety, a sentiment of peace and trust. The discovery that the "conscious person is continuous with a wider self through which saving experiences come" brings a sense of freedom, a joy, a power to do good,

which wonderfully transforms and uplifts the life. Thus it is he who "lives the life," not he who holds the theory, who really proves the reality of religion.

From first to last, Professor James persuasively contends for the primacy of these first-hand evidences, in contrast with speculative arguments. His chapter on abstract theology and philosophical absolutism is one of the strongest in the book. It is difficult to see how any reader can fail to be convinced that religious experience stands first, while theology, all institutions, and doctrines are secondary. Yet the relativity of religious experience is shown with equal persuasiveness. The authority of mystical experience counts as one authority simply. The authority of reason counts as one more. Neither is infallible.

The two great considerations in this book are, therefore, these: (1) The evidence for a higher order, with the fruits of belief in that order which the religious life displays; and (2) the method of interpreting the evidence, both in regard to the first-hand experience itself and the results which show its value. That is to say, the question of fact stands first; the question of values is equally an affair of experience. Until you have enjoyed the religious experience in some regenerating form, you are not entitled to pass judgment upon its reality. But when you have felt the presence

of a transforming power in your life, and formulated your experience in terms of thought, you must again refer to experience as the ultimate test, not to a theological criterion supposed to be universal.

The next important point is the formulation of a satisfactory psychological hypothesis by which to explain the various phenomena of conversion, ecstasy, and prayer, namely, the theory of a subconscious or subliminal region. Here, again, the empirical test is ultimate, for, as sound as this hypothesis is, no one is likely to see the force of Professor James's argument who is not yet conscious of unusual mental states. It is, of course, easier for the dogmatic naturalist to declare that there is naught in religion which cannot be explained on a naturalistic basis. But to conclude that, because a satisfactory psychological basis has been proposed, therefore there is no reason to conceive of anything beyond our ordinary consciousness, is to miss the most important point in the whole volume. The extreme liberality of the author's attitude should not blind one to the fact that the book is itself essentially an expression of the religious spirit. The perverse reader will still doubt. But he who understands will see that the theory here proposed makes religion far more plausible, gives the greater reason for believing that the soul actually is in immediate relation

with a higher order, a real world of a superior character.

It is on account of its persuasive empiricism, then, that this book marks an epoch in the development of a philosophy of religion. It is here, too, that it makes a permanent contribution to human thought. For it ought to be an established conclusion from this time forth that religious experience stands first; its formulation and organisation into institutions, secondary. So far as this result is concerned the book is worthy of unqualified acceptance. For even if institutions be accorded a very prominent place in the development and preservation of religion, the founders of such institutions ought constantly to remember that first-hand experience is their reason for being. Only by constantly returning to the sources can one keep the expressions of the religious spirit pure.

Yet the fact that institutions have deplorably failed to be loyal to the spirit of Christianity should not blind one to the unparalleled beauty and simplicity of the life of Jesus. Here, too, is a source to return to, perhaps as frequently as to the sanctuaries of one's own heart. One cannot help believing that there is a normal type, that all problems and interests are secondary as compared with that divine quickening which so fills the mind that there is no time to think of the how

and the why of subjective experience. Jesus was far more than a saint, far more than a mystic. Many of the tests which are applicable to egoistic types of religious experience would be simply irrelevant if applied to him. Moreover, in his simple, direct gospel there is a solution for the perplexities of the religious life for which one may look in vain in the fields of critical thought. On the other hand, if any one ever showed by his conduct that he believed in a superior reality, it was the carpenter-prophet of Nazareth.

There is another type of religious experience about which Professor James has little to say, although the need of it is more and more apparent as the volume draws to an end. We are constantly warned, for example, that saintliness easily runs to excess. There is very much in the lives of the religious devotees here described which one would not care to repeat. Since there is no one religious essence, no type of spiritual life which proves adequate, so far as it is here able to give account of itself, the question arises, What is the resource? If all mystical experience must be criticised, adjusted in relation to other experience, what shall be the criterion? Granted this collection of religious experiences, what shall one make out of it?

We have noted that the fruits of experience are tests of the worth of religion. But mere experi-

ence is only the first step. Shall one accept *all* of the fruits? If not, there must be some standard by which to judge them, even if this standard must itself be verified by further experience.

Professor James hints at that which for many readers will be the solution of this problem when he points out the relative deficiency of intellect on the part of most saints, and calls attention to the fanatical excesses which often mar even the noblest fruits of saintliness. In the last analysis the mere saint is not attractive. One turns again with renewed interest to that other type of religious life in which the emotions are wisely restrained, but where there is nevertheless great depth of genuine religious sentiment — the refined, cultivated, well-organised religious life. The world into which the saintliness of a man like James Martineau admits us is of an entirely different character. Here, religion no longer appears as merely presented, not in its crude form. But it has been put through the tests of thought and become transfigured. It is the religion of the most delicate sentiment, of rhythmic utterance and poetic metaphor. It does not suffer by the process, but is purified of the dross which encumbers the more sensuous forms of religion.

There is many a religious devotee who is naturally as mystical as any of the saints of whom Professor James writes, but with whom ecstasy

and excess have given place to calm contemplation and moderation. Again, there are those who, at a certain stage in their career, would have been fit candidates for sudden conversion. But, having reached a more highly developed stage before the religious nature was deeply touched, their spiritual awakening has been gradual. Hence there have been no emotional excesses. These people have made less stir in the world at any given time. Their influence on their fellows has been quiet, but deep and lasting. Shall one say that they are any less religious than the men and women who are able to stand up and declare themselves "converted"?

The theory of the subliminal self, and the immediate presence of a higher order, is no less applicable to this type. The spiritual insights are no less genuine. But the whole life has been adapted with these higher influences in view, the intuitions have been so organised as to avoid the irrationalities of mysticism. Some of these religious devotees are doubtless called "cold" by the outwardly demonstrative people of the emotional type. But, again, who shall say that they are any less religious? Need religion always be demonstrative in the same way?

The fallibility of mysticism demands just such an organisation as calm yet appreciative thought can give it. The criterion of mysticism cannot

be intellect alone, for the intellect utterly despises mysticism. The reconstruction must come through illumined reason, reason which admits the primacy of religious experience, yet is sensible of its high calling as the ally and exponent of spiritual revelation. The values ascertained by reason must once more be tested by experience, yet reason will always have a last word to say, to the enrichment of the fruits of conduct.

Experience as such is always just so much general material for reason to react upon. If the ideal is a golden mean, there must be a very broad standard of adjustment, one which each individual may apply for himself. Mere expression, let us repeat, is only one step. It is possible to have too many loves. The neurotic temperament may be the condition of spiritual revelations of a certain type, but there may be more desirable types. The conversion process offers all sorts of new sentiments and notions for examination and selection. To select is to begin to organise. To organise is to pass beyond the merely given, the mystical, the observed or felt experience, to that more highly developed region where reason and the spirit combine.

The moral of Professor James's book would seem, then, to be twofold: First yield yourself fully to religious experience on your highest side, cultivate the silences, and preserve an open mind.

But also turn upon your experiences and note their value in relation to the soundest ideals of life. The fact that philosophy is temporarily secondary to experience does not necessarily mean that it is always to be subordinate. Professor James's arraignment of dogmatic theology and speculative absolutism need not deter one from the pursuit of a broadly inclusive philosophy of rationalised experience. Such a philosophy is demanded by a description of experience which simply acquaints us with its varieties. The desire is all the stronger to know the meaning of such diversity. Thus the present volume not only deepens one's faith in religion as a universal reality, but arouses a zest for that philosophical unity which the book fails to give.

CHAPTER IV

PRIMITIVE BELIEFS

THE most impressive fact in the life of man is the universal appearance and persistence of beliefs in an invisible reality or spiritual order in the face of that which every day and everywhere seems to show that the material world is the beginning and end of all. Formerly, it was supposed that there were savage tribes without a vestige of belief in religion, and it was positively asserted that many peoples were idolatrous and atheistical. But scientific men have now become sufficiently acquainted with primitive beliefs and customs to know that such statements are rashly unwarranted. For if there be not a notion of deity or a heavenly state, if there be no distinctively religious rites and customs, there is at least an emotional background out of which religion emerges. We are warned not to conclude that a tribe is idolatrous until we have penetrated behind the symbol to the emotional attitude. Spencer and others have tried to reduce these primitive indications of religion to beliefs in

ghosts, but such attempts are hopelessly antiquated, now that scientific men have actually lived among savage tribes and appreciatively studied their rites. No sectarian religious devotee would have found such evidence, for he would have been prejudiced in favour of his particular doctrine. It remained for impartial students of human nature, who were willing to make great sacrifices, to discover the real intent of savage life. The results are already so encouraging that we may look for constantly increasing evidences of religion. Sometimes the belief in immortality has been absent. The appearance of myths concerning a deity has often been long delayed. But such ideas are no less impressive when they come late. Indeed the power of religion is the more striking the greater the development of man, since, the longer delayed, the more resistance it must meet.

The great fact is that when the religious consciousness has once appeared it grows and persists and constantly reappears in new forms. Those who have the breadth of mind and the sanity of scholarship to penetrate beneath the diverse forms, ceremonies, symbols, and doctrines assure us that they find practically the same religious evidences the world over. That is, the great facts are those of the inner life, belief in an unseen order of some sort, belief in the soul as

the possessor of life apart from the vitality of the body, some notion of a future state, and an idea of a Creator or Supreme Being. Doctrines and terms often differ greatly. The modes of life are often strikingly dissimilar. There is abundant ground for dispute as long as mere terminology is considered. But when the sympathetic student penetrates behind the forms he finds the essence practically the same. The time will come when primitive myths will no longer be set down as superstitions, when the expressions "pagan religion," "heathen," and the like will never again be heard.

It is, of course, easy to read modern ideas into ancient times. But it is safer to attribute genuine religious sentiments to crude ceremonies than to put them down as atheistical, and turn coldly away. The saying that there is "nothing new under the sun" is strikingly confirmed when we turn from our modern world to such a picture of primitive life as a scientific treatise on anthropology contains. For example, take the classic work on the subject with which the studies of many a modern seeker after ancient truth has begun, Tylor's *Primitive Culture*. The most remarkable characteristic of the primitive life into which that book admits us is the intimacy with which man regarded the spiritual world. Or, rather, one might say that because the entire

world was peopled by primitive man with spirits, man knew only his spiritual world. For not only did man find himself beset in his dreams by spirits, attended by them from birth to death, with the prospect that he would be accompanied by them to a domain beyond death, but he peopled the visible world with spirits. This is a very remarkable fact, I say, since the *a priori* supposition is that the "animal man" would seek decidedly physical explanations.

It is natural to suppose that materialism was one of the earliest forms of human belief. Yet the evidence shows that man did not judge the world by the fact that it contained stones and masses of apparently motionless substance. Nor did he note the physical regularity which scientific men have since called "mechanical." The primitive myths and other remains indicate that man did not distinguish between himself and nature. He was probably more inclined to project his own emotions into nature than to import the idea of matter into his inner life. Neither in the inner world nor in the outer did he detect any such regularity as astronomers later discovered by the study of the heavens. Hence the somewhat capricious play of his own emotions seems to have given him his type of thought, his way of regarding the world. It was naturally the poetic or myth-making tendency which became prominent,

rather than what we should call the scientific interest. Therefore materialism had no place.

It is well to remember and repeat that man's earliest conceptions of unity were probably so far unlike what we should call either poetry, religion, or science, that we ought rather to say that out of these primitive conceptions the beginnings of various branches of knowledge gradually appeared. In India, to this day, the theory which corresponds to religion and science is still one. In the Western world the differentiation between religion and science has been such as to lead to violent warfare. Thus, side by side with the attitude towards the world which regards it as a testing-ground for the soul, we find a purely logical interest which throws religion entirely out of account. The typical logician is not concerned to study life as he finds it and ask himself if his facts are true to all sides of human experience. He is in search of formal consistency, a way of thinking about things which shall involve no logical fallacy. Thus he marks off for himself a small segment of human thought, and is content to regard that as the whole. If you ask him what assurance his conclusions give that the world will come out right, he can say nothing; for that is not his interest. On the other hand, the religious devotee is so sure that all things are ordered for the best that he feels under no obliga-

tion to examine his logical processes to see if he have committed a fallacy in reasoning.

Thus the tendency of civilised thought is toward sharp differentiation, as contrasted with the poetically animistic whole of primitive man. For the empiricist, life is only regarded as a unity in case he holds that life consists of one experience, howbeit that experience is a mixture of conflicting factors. He believes in the world because he has experience of the world. He believes in truth because he holds that experience can be interpreted.

For primitive man, the world must have been a vast theatre for the interplay of beliefs which were in large part coloured by his own moods. Such a study of primitive life as Andrew Lang's *The Making of Religion*, with its numerous references to recent investigations, shows that there is scarcely anything in our modern spiritualistic, theosophical, wonder-working age which is not paralleled by occult beliefs which were almost universally held in savage times. This remarkable fact as emphatically calls for an explanation as the most recent developments of belief in the unseen. It is evidently a question of human nature, not a question of life at any one epoch. To explain it at any given time is in large part to account for it at all times.

The reader cannot fail to be impressed by the

rationality with which Tylor develops the animistic explanation of this great fact.[1] Yet, as plausible as animism is when applied to primitive man's relation to nature, applied to the inner life it tends to minimise the realities of religion. It is not difficult to understand why, as Tylor tells us, "savages talk quite seriously to beasts alive or dead, offer them homage, ask pardon when it is their painful duty to hunt and kill them." But Tylor places so much emphasis on dreams and illusory psychic states that there seems to be no sufficient basis left for the more genuine phenomena of life. The widespread evidences of belief in the soul, in second sight, in the gods, and a life after death indicate that the original experiences out of which these beliefs grew were far from being illusions. It was undoubtedly because man was strikingly aware of his inner life that he persistently and universally objectified that life and attributed the same reality to everything about him. If we would really account for the remarkable facts of primitive beliefs we must sympathetically endeavour to reconstruct the life of those ancient times. We should be as fair in our treatment of myths and stories of second sight and wonder-working as in our studies of the most enlightened religious devotees.

It is, of course, difficult to conceive of the

[1] *Primitive Culture*, chapters on Animism.

state of mind out of which the animistic interpretation of the world was developed. For modern thought has taught us to view things in a clear light. To the savage the earth must have been enveloped in a hazy indistinctness, where none of the distinctions which we make had been noted. The world was one in a sense which has probably never been equalled. Man as apart from nature, and nature apart from man, had not been discovered. Instinct, feeling, and impulse were doubtless the prime factors in man's life. Thought played comparatively little part. There were facts enough which demanded thought; the great world which we think about was there. But that which thought deals with when it draws distinctions and discovers laws, had not yet attracted attention.

For our present purposes, the inquiry begins with the first awakenings of wondering thought. Out of the confused mass of cosmic impressions certain aspects of life began to stand out in contrast to others. The regular sequence (as yet unnoted) of natural phenomena was (as perceived) interrupted by some unusual event, such as the killing of a member of the tribe by a ferocious animal, the accidental fall of a man over a cliff. In due time, the accumulated memory of such events undoubtedly led man to speculate concerning their origin.

It is hardly probable that primitive man believed in causation as we understand the term. But he must early have begun to associate certain sequences with certain actions, so that by performing the action he could attain the sequence—except when something interfered. With interference doubtless came wonder and speculation. Finding himself balked, the consciousness naturally grew that there were other powers besides himself. Moreover, certain disturbances within the human organism frequently upset all expectations. Man felt aches and pains, and contracted various diseases. His fellow-men and his children died. There were enemies to contend with, and wild beasts to avoid. There were many mysterious phenomena, and there was much that he could not control.

In general, we may rationally conceive of primitive man as endeavouring to realise certain desires and accomplish definite results. He felt the pangs of hunger and sought to appease his desire. Animals were near which he could prey upon, and he naturally did not like to be thwarted in his desires. Anything which thwarted him, of course, provoked first wonder, then an attempt to adjust himself to that which was apparently the cause of interference. The desire to carry out his plans doubtless had much to do with the exercises of a quasi-religious character which give the first

evidences of belief in supernatural powers. The quasi-religious activities of the arrow worshippers of Ceylon, for example, are scarcely distinguishable from endeavours to get the better of powers that might thwart the hunter. The primitive life out of which religion grew was doubtless in such cases largely a personal affair and bore little reference to anything higher.

Mystified by various occurrences which interfered with his expectations, what was more natural than that man should try to explain the unusual by reference to other facts drawn from different departments of his life? For example, man had frequently been awed by various natural upheavals, such as earthquakes and floods. He was perplexed in his efforts to explain sleep, his dreams during sleep, his visions, and other strange experiences, some of which came to him personally; others came enlarged by hearsay. He was doubtless as eager to account for the occult subjective phenomena as for the objective phenomena of nature, death, disease, and the like. For him, the world was so truly one thing, that it probably did not occur to him to classify his experiences and seek one explanation for one type, another for another. To this general confusion at the outset is doubtless attributable the mystical explanations of the objective, or natural, in terms of the subjective, or psychical.

Of the widespread existence of unusual subjective phenomena there is abundant evidence. Primitive man not only had dreams and visions of various sorts, but believed in ghosts, obsession, demoniacal possession, disease caused by obsession, and the like. Even the rude Veddahs of Ceylon believed in guardianship by the spirits of the dead.[1] These spirit companions were supposed to be ever watchful, caring for the sick, aiding the hunter, and paying visits in dreams. It is clear that man had abundant evidences of this sort to draw upon in the myths and folk-lore of his tribe.

On general principles, there is reason to believe that *what is present now in human life was present in primitive times in some form.* Unless we proceed on this assumption it is difficult to account for the later developments of the religious life. If we make the assumption we obviously do greater justice to primitive life. For the widespread evidence of beliefs of a semi-religious nature indicates that for savage man at least there was something present which was very real. The further such an hypothesis as Spencer's "ghost theory" is carried the more problems are raised. We are then compelled to explain the greater by the lesser, to account for the higher by the lower. Whereas, if we adopt the hypothesis that

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii., 117.

the greater was present at least in a potential form, we have a sufficient basis of explanation.

Professor Le Conte argues that "pure, unmixed error does not live to trouble us long." [1] When we study the myths of Greece we are amazed at the closeness to laws of nature and life as a whole which is exemplified in these stories—so frequently dismissed as "inventions" or as of philological value only. Myths are often prophetical. Some of the earliest explanations are the sanest—so the latest research shows. And while one should be cautious in attributing modern wisdom to the ancients, while the men of old may not have consciously known their wisdom, they may have had a *feeling* experience which brought them nearer to the heart of things than the usual theories assumed.

At least this is a defensible point of view, namely, that (1) the realities of life were present to primitive man; that (2) his theory of life was based as much on real religious experience as upon meditation in regard to his contact with nature, or his more subjective and partly illusory experiences; and (3) that therefore our hypothetical explanation of his world-scheme must at least be as broad as his total feeling-life suggests.

Precisely what the elements of religion are would not be easy to say, particularly as religion

[1] *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought.*

runs over into other departments of life. Were we to undertake a minute investigation we should encounter certain marked differences of opinion in regard to experiences usually classified as "mystical." But this much we may safely assume, namely, that there exists what is known as the religious consciousness which has before it certain well-defined objects. If it be true, as many religious writers assume, that the soul is *in immediate relation with God*, and that, therefore, there is reality in these higher experiences; if, moreover, God be conceived as eternal and omnipresent, then we may unqualifiedly declare that God was present to all primitive men. *God could not have been introduced at some point in evolution.*

It is true, there has been an evolution of religious consciousness and of man's knowledge of that consciousness. But that may be largely growth in thought rather than in feeling; and it does not show that there are now any new qualities in relation to the human soul.

If we compare the modern man of the higher education with primitive man, we find that the advance has been largely in capacity of *thought* rather than in capacity of feeling. In fact, it may be doubted whether the modern man has half the capacity for feeling. What man has gained in intellectual power he may have lost in sensibility.

Now, it is unquestionably feeling which brings

us closest to the original experiences of life. Feeling may not be intelligent or discriminative, but it has the reality, the immediacy. This is doubtless the reason why primitive man was closer to nature. He yielded himself fully to the play of his emotions. He was probably moved by very violent emotional reactions.

There is reason to believe, then, that whatever reality there is now in man's psychic and spiritual experiences was also felt by primitive man. It is possible that, even assuming a measure of reality in the belief in communion with spirits, man was more conscious of such influences then than he is now. A real experience might now be explained away as an hallucination simply because so little of its reality could actually be felt by a modern intellectually developed person.

Moved by certain spiritual activities, man gave and still gives the best explanation he can. The fact that the explanations are fantastical *does not prove that there is no reality in the experiences.* In general terms, one may also argue, as already suggested, that man does not "invent" a myth out of nothing. Psychologically, a pure invention is, in the first place, impossible. The fact that, as anthropology shows, the same myths are held by widely differing peoples, in different climes and ages, and among different races, indicates that there is something in human experi-

ence corresponding to the myths. The myths may be absurd and fantastic. But that shows the crudity of human terminology,—it does not prove that the experiences were hallucinations.

We are apt to look down upon the American Indian who reverences his totem. But when the young warrior goes forth alone to find the totem spirit, his emotion may be fully as sacred to him as the consecration to philanthropy is to a civilised Christian worker.

We do not need to look as far up in the scale of being as human life to find evidences of higher powers than those which are classifiable under the head of the five physical senses. The homing instincts of the bee, the pig, the pigeon, the dog, etc., are evidences of a finer sense. Occasionally in all ages there have been those who have become known as gifted with various occult powers such as clairvoyance and "second sight."[1] There may be much or little in such reports. But assuming that there is but little, we may rationally conclude that primitive man, with his greater powers of receptivity, or feeling, enjoyed the benefits of these powers to a degree equally great, if not greater. We may with as good right conclude that there was as much reality in them. The hypothesis of the subliminal self proposed by Myers offers a scientific basis for the explanation

[1] See Lang, *The Making of Religion*, p. 70 *et seq.*

of such phenomena. Whether objectively real or not, such phenomena may have a basis in the greater activities of the subconscious mind; and the chances are that as these hidden activities are better understood there will be a tendency to attribute reality to psychic experiences which have been dismissed as unreal simply because scientific men lack the hypothesis by which to account for them.

It is possible, then, that the savage belief in wizards, medicine-men, and the like may have had a real basis, namely, the unusual ability displayed by those who possessed a large subliminal region. Possibly many of these primitive seers did actually divine things in a number of instances; hence their reputations grew. On this hypothesis, it would be easy to account for the appearance and development of magic. Some who actually had divined things correctly would try to repeat the performance by introducing all sorts of devices. When these devices "took" with the credulous, the wizards would naturally resort to them more and more. They would thus give more attention to magic and depart farther from the few real experiences which started the whole development. Others looking on, but possessing no occult power, would imitate the diviners.

It was natural that the highest principle which

man found within himself should be attributed to nature; that when unusual events occurred he should offer a spiritual explanation; and that he should resort to various devices, magical and religious, to attain his ends when thwarted. But upon this hypothesis there would be more reason for the belief than on Tylor's hallucination theory. Meditation on the phenomena of nature evidently played a very prominent part in the growth of primitive man's view of the world. The theory took an animistic turn, to be sure, but on a naturalistic basis. Just as there may have been real experiences at the foundation of man's psychic theories and myths, so the myths in regard to nature had a real basis. Tylor does not, of course, deny this, but he does not lay sufficient stress upon it.

For example, take the Hindoo god Varuna. Human characteristics were later attributed to him, but originally the *natural basis* was probably the ground of belief in him. Certain sequences were observed in the activities of the heavens; for example, the coming of rain. Varuna corresponds in part to the Greek Neptune, and in the end of the Vedic period, when the gods were waning and other conceptions were coming forward, Varuna is still permitted to hold this primitive function. This indicates that it was in some respects at least his original function. The natural basis seems to

have preceded and outlived the human and moral character. The moral character may have been the outgrowth of the natural basis: Varuna may have become the god of order in general because he was first conceived as the god of a very important natural sequence, the coming of rain. The origin may, then, have been largely *objective*. Reflection upon Varuna's greatness as the god of order may have led the way to the larger conception of world-order or unity which made his existence superfluous. We would then have a basis of belief in a Supreme Being evolved from the study of nature.

One is inclined to believe that primitive man's belief in God, in spiritual power, had a larger origin, then, than the more limited animistic theory would have us believe. If man felt a higher principle in himself, if actually in touch with spiritual power, he would naturally regard the universe as partaking of that power. His theory would not then be merely man *writ large*, or his subjective states objectified. It would be a combination of objective and subjective elements, taking their clue from the phenomena of the soul. In other words, the theory of the soul itself was obviously not modelled on the experience with "ghosts," but was a more general product of man's daily life.

Meditation on moving objects would naturally

play a part in the development of this belief. Objects were seen to move, but what moved them was not seen. Man did not *see* the life in the body. He did not *see* the forces of nature. He *felt* the effects of the forces. He felt the life coursing within him. After a member of the tribe had died, he naturally associated the life which had moved the friend's body with the soul which displayed all these mysterious powers. A creature of feeling, feeling was naturally more real to him than aught else. What more natural than that he should offer an explanation in terms of feeling, the invisible? And what more natural than for him to combine the feelings of awe, fear, etc., in the presence of nature, *e. g.*, thunderstorms, with the more subjective feelings which he associated with the soul?

The widespread belief in totemism shows that primitive man conceived a close relation to exist between himself and nature. This alone is strong evidence that he held a rather broad view of life, neither a subjective nor an objective theory alone.

It is noticeable that among one of the most primitive peoples, the Veddahs of Ceylon, there is a belief in a general supernatural power which may be invoked. This would indicate that such a belief may appear very early in human development. The magical efficiency attributed to stones by the Melanesians is another illustration. Plants

were thought by primitive men generally to be animated.[1] Rivers, stones, trees, and weapons were addressed, propitiated, and punished. In general, nature was moved by unseen powers, and when the soul was sometimes identified with the pulse, the heart, the breath, etc., this was obviously because life had there been observed to be most vigorous. All these observations of the phenomena of life in nature as akin to himself may have played a part in the growth of man's conception. The subjective experiences on which so much stress has been placed may have been at times far less prominent. Belief in the reality of ghosts doubtless strengthened the conclusions drawn from observation of nature. But the more common experiences of daily objective life conceivably played a greater part.

The conception of a god, held later, is obviously too large a doctrine to be traced to subjective experiences as the primal source. If, according to the hypothesis of this chapter, man actually felt the presence of God, or of spirits, or a general religious or spiritual power, we may rationally regard his *whole feeling-life* as the true ground of belief in spiritual reality, and hence of a spiritual explanation of unfamiliar events.

It may now be argued that primitive man's belief in the soul as capable of separating itself

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, i., 474.

from the body points rather to the subjective experiences as most influential. The belief in a future existence was widespread. It was supposed that the soul travelled during sleep. Some tribes thought that man had several souls. Even sickness among some tribes, *e. g.*, the Algonquin Indians,[1] was accounted for on the supposition that man's "shadow" was unsettled or detached from his body. And there is much more evidence of a similar character. Souls that return, for example, are said to possess greater power, not alone to torment but to work wonders. The belief in transmigration is strong evidence that the soul was held to be an invisible being of greater power, such that it could even return to fleshly existence and complete the life which was unfinished when death intervened.

But the crucial question is, Is man's belief in the soul as portrayed by writers like Tylor sufficient to account for all that man found in nature and for his belief in God? On this supposition there is a wide chasm to bridge between the belief in the soul in Tylor's sense and the belief in God where the ancestor worship and polytheistic links are lacking. Lang gives strong evidence to show that the conception of God is decidedly different.[2] For example, God is conceived as a maker, or creator. There seems to have been

[1] Tylor, i., 436.

[2] *The Making of Religion*, chap. xi.

much primitive argument from design. Words for "Father," in the supreme sense, are often found. It is obviously an easier explanation to deem the God-theory *a product of man's total life* than to regard it as the result of a restricted subjective portion. If God was present to primitive consciousness, God Himself was the chief reason for belief in God, and hence of a spiritual explanation of things. Primitive man may truly be said to be "feeling after Him." Again, we find evidence of *real* experience of a higher nature in the fact that there are evidences of *unselfishness*, of a *moral* consciousness.[1] The sense of *sacredness*, already referred to, is further evidence. This element has been doubted by some travellers because they were unable to obtain definite answers to their questions on this point. But, assuming that there was deep reality in these experiences for those who had them, one would not expect even the savage to wear his heart on his sleeve. Moreover, those who have dwelt sympathetically among primitive tribes have in due course begun to understand this element of sacredness, and to realise the difficulty of discovering it when the inquiry is confessedly designed to make the subject of it talk about his own religious emotions.

Even among the Melanesians there is a feeling

[1] Lang, *op. cit.*, 176 *et seq.*

of *reverence* for the supernatural power supposed to reside in stones. Are such sentiments due to the mere feeling of awe, or to the awakening of a higher Power in men?

Finally, evidences of intellectual development are not lacking. Man early began to meditate upon the phenomena of his daily life, and to give evidences of growth in metaphysical explanation. Scientific travellers testify to the curiosity of savages. Lang contends for the curiosity of primitive man.[1] That man was capable of making explanations of what occurred is conclusively shown by his purposive acts in relation to the natural forces which he sought to control. The fact of curiosity points to the same tendency in man. Now, if he could argue from the facts of his subjective visions, why could he not argue from the facts of nature as a whole? Why confine his reasonings to so small a beginning?

Had man possessed a physics and a chemistry, had he been better acquainted with anatomy, he might have proposed a more physical explanation for things. But he evidently reasoned from that with which he was most familiar. His inner life was the centre of reactions, called out, as it were, in two directions. Thunderstorms and other natural phenomena of a startling character aroused cosmic awe. The death of comrades

[1] *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 85–89.

brought more personal emotion. Experiences with second sight and divination brought emotion of another type. And from the obscure world of dreams came airy shapes which produced equally strong reactions. Then, in turn, his whole sentient life reacted to produce a world-conception, resulting from this multiform mass. The first emotions were varied; the conceptions springing from them were naturally varied. Some were purely personal, and the reactions had personal aims in view, namely, success in hunting and fighting; whereas others were cosmic, and led to cosmic thoughts. Still others may have arisen from immediate relation with the Divine Being, hence they suggested the conceptions of Maker, Creator, Father. There was a difference in the reactionary concepts because the feeling-ground was different in these cases. There was a gap between theories of ghosts and the conception of God because there was a gap in the feeling experience; a wide divergence between the alleged contemplation of a "ghost," and the real sense of awe, reverence, which inspired the religious life.

On this hypothesis, it would in every case be the *feeling* experience which would be the prime reality. Religion might then precede magic in many instances, and precede the cruder repulsive myths; since the attempt to word the feeling was naturally symbolical at best. Handed on to less

religious souls, the symbols would naturally grow more coarse and crude, and in time become associated with the fantastic. Even in later times, *e. g.*, Buddha's life, extravagant stories grew up round a prophet.

It might now be argued that in endeavouring to account for primitive man's beliefs I have fallen into the common error and *read into* primitive life that which is found only in highly civilised life. To this I reply that I do not attribute the *fulness* of the later religious consciousness to primitive man, but the germs of this consciousness were conceivably present. That primitive man really gave a spiritual explanation is a fact. Granted the fact, how shall we account for it? The cause must be equal to the effect. The hypothesis of Tylor appears to be inadequate. We must, then, extend the horizon.

The critic might, then, contend that by using such a vague word as "spiritual" the foregoing argument is subject to manifold ambiguities. I admit that the term has a wide connotation; but the attitude toward the world which I am now seeking to characterise is confessedly vague. Just because man was unable in primitive times to distinguish himself from nature, to draw lines of demarcation between the material and immaterial, his explanation assumed the form which may very well be called "spiritual." The term,

then, stands for *that which is invisible*, in the most general sense. According to the thesis here presented, man explained events by reference to the spiritual just because he was more impressed by the invisible. In his sleep, in his waking state, on usual and unusual days, in the presence of a storm and in the presence of death, the most real object for him was an invisible somewhat which, whether one or many, personal or impersonal, stood as the source of his experiences. Rightly or wrongly, the cause was to be found beyond the tangibly material. It was something mysterious, awe-inspiring, wonderful. Out of this sense of the invisible grew his conceptions of the soul, the world, the gods, and, finally, the Father.

I am not assuming teleology. I am not venturing to say that God was revealing Himself to primitive man as the first step in a long series of revelations culminating in the Jewish dispensation and Christianity. The problem of teleology would take us too far afield. The contention is simply for the natural basis of such religious consciousness as the records which have come down to us from primitive times compel us to posit and account for. The minimum measure of that consciousness would seem to compel us to posit a greater degree of reality in primitive man's life than is admitted by anthropological writers who place stress on ghosts, visions, and illusory sub-

jective experiences. The purely animistic hypothesis suggests as many questions as it seems to settle. For example, ghosts are associated with death. The idea of the soul as conceived by animism is largely associated with the idea of death and the hereafter. But God is worshipped in a way in which ghosts are not. God is conceived as existing before death invaded the world. Men became subject to death by the infringement of some "taboo."

Death, then, was simply *one* of the events to be accounted for on a larger basis. The hypothesis here advocated meets these larger demands and solves some of the enigmas of animism. While not, then, wholly agreeing with Lang, one would be inclined to give a prominent place to his arguments as preparing the way for the larger view. When we possess greater knowledge of man's later religious consciousness, and of all experiences classified as "spiritualistic," we shall undoubtedly be in a better position to understand some of the primitive religious myths. Meanwhile the present discussion is offered as an essay in the larger field.

CHAPTER V

THE LARGER FAITH

A FEW years ago I met a sailor whose ship had encountered a terrible cyclone at sea. The ship stood in the cyclone centre, or calm spot, round which the elements raged with irresistible fury. In any other position the ship would undoubtedly have foundered in the gale. Yet from this secure vantage-point one could look out on the storm in perfect serenity. The sturdy confidence with which my informant described the impressive scene bespoke the calmness which it had inspired, and one felt for the moment the seaman's reverential trust in his ship.

It would be difficult to find a more graphic illustration of that spiritual calm spot amidst the storms of life which is called poise, equanimity. It is typical of the life which is inspired by faith in the divine order, a faith which is voiced by the scriptural quotation, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee."

The thought is familiar, and such faith is universally commended as "beautiful." Even those

who do not deem the universe a divine order admit the value of a purifying faith which inspires calmness. But it is one thing to have a unifying insight and another to live in conformity with it. Many are able to argue from the facts of life to establish their personal faith, while others possess practical faith in more religious form, but lack the *rationale* of it. We have had systems of thought which emphasised the calm spot and practically ignored the storms of life; and systems which enlarged upon the storms, but neglected the calm spot. Many who still cling to old theological standards find it impossible to harmonise their spiritual faith with modern scientific knowledge. Others have made a sort of religion of modern science, but still hunger for spiritual food. Thus there is need of a larger system which shall not only satisfy head and heart, but provide a more practical faith to live by.

To the majority of men Emerson's profound saying perfectly applies: "Our faith comes in moments, our vice is habitual." Our faith is apt to be a vague, intermittent feeling, a faith for Sundays or for periods of financial depression. We fail to think it out to the end to see what it logically implies, what it means, to be consistently faithful. Thus our actions confess that we do not fully believe our own doctrine, or that we are unwilling to meet the tests which really prove it

to be faith. Doubts intrude with which we are incompetent to deal because we have never taken our faith up into the understanding. Yet there is as much to be learned from the discovery of our failures as from the study of those whose lives best illustrate the simplicity of faith. If we are sometimes unable in these modern days to hold to or refashion the faith of our youth, it is because we have not thus analysed our failures to see what lies beyond.

It is actual study of life in quest of an ultimate goal, which shows what is meant by belief in the divine order. It is the life itself, the consciousness of something higher, that is the prime reality. In the end we must reckon with that great fact, and come to closer terms with mysticism. But there is also a profound lesson to be learned from the sympathetic study of man's attempts to express that supreme fact. Both the intellectual and the spiritual failures and successes have significance for us. Fortunate shall we be if, while studying either half of the problem, we forget not the other half. The great fault, alike with the spiritual and the intellectual devotees of religion, is that they do not pursue their special doctrine to the end, to its transition into the territory of the opposite school.

How quickly the believer in a special form of unity confesses himself a dualist when he steps out-

side of his specialism or begins to apply his faith! The orthodox Christian of the old type professed faith in one God, yet believed in a devil and the disruptive power of sin. Many earnest Christians are so concerned lest life's voyage end ere the souls of the "lost" are saved that they forget the true significance of God's love. The incentive which prompts them is anxiety, and this is really distrust in God; it is equivalent to the belief that the divine order ends with this life, that the love of God is limited. They forget that according to their faith the love of God is continuous, omnipresent, eternal. Were they consistent they would adopt a wholly different attitude. Instead of approaching the so-called heathen as "lost," they would address them as "sons of God" needing brotherly help to recognise the divine order, from which in reality no soul is ever separated. They would take Jesus at his word when he said that "not a sparrow falleth without the Father"; they would trust God to the end. But what an attainment! How few really act as if they believed that "God is in His world"; that God, not man, is at the helm of events; that God, not man, is primarily responsible.

There are many popular attitudes which show that professed faith in God is rather distrust in Him. By far the greater number of these are characterised by anxiety about storms that never

come. Far more stress is put upon the accidents of the weather than upon the steady, even flow of that resistless tide of life which bears us safely on from day to night, from night to day, from summer to autumn, and from winter to spring, with a regularity so punctual that we forget that each moment furnishes new reason for faith in God.

Again, the attitude of many ethical culturists, although supposed to be inspired by faith in the integrity of the moral law, is practically a confession of atheism, strange as it may seem. Suppose, for example, it is a time when the nation is plunged in cruel warfare, the integrity of the constitution is threatened, and all the miseries of the inglorious empires of the past are imminent. It seems to the troubled observer that the country is going to ruin. Accordingly the ethical philosopher bitterly condemns the supposed villains of the play, anxiety is heralded abroad, and class feeling is intensified. Meanwhile, where is God? Where is law, order, the great calm spot of the universe? May it be possible that there is a deeper meaning in this strife, that it is the breaking up of an old order?

This is no defence of empire, of injustice, or usurpation, nor is it a depreciation of true ethical sentiment. It is one of the sanest signs of the times that the sense of justice is growing, and

surely no one would say a word to impede its growth. But it is one thing to have our sense of justice outraged, and another to look beyond injustice to its relationship with the moral order. As noble as it is to be stirred by the fire of moral zeal, it is nobler to have constant faith in God. The anxious personal attitude is apt to be extremely short-sighted. It overlooks the manifold readjustments of natural law whereby wrongs tend to right themselves, and errors to be shaped into truth. It places emphasis almost wholly upon man, not upon law, system. It is thus faithless to its own ethical ideal; forgetful, too, of the source of the moral law.

It requires but slight knowledge of history to show that there is a greater power working through kings and presidents, senates and political parties than any single class of men are capable of yielding. Men form new parties to offset the old. Meanwhile, a new party forms to offset that. A crime which demands unsparing condemnation when viewed by itself and from the outside, may be turned to national account by the incoming party.

The real question, then, is this: Is the universe regulated by man, or is it guided by the love and wisdom of God? If it is a divine order, all philosophies are vain which leave God out; all methods of social reform are futile except those

which co-operate with the steady march of events from lower to higher, whereby the social ideal is progressively realised. If anywhere in the universe there is fate, it is here: the flow of the divine tide from worse to better, never pausing, never faltering, granting full freedom to men, yet achieving its ends despite any obstacle; helped, not hindered, by human opposition, warfare, struggle, and defeat.

Or, let us illustrate by the intense discontent of those who take the labour problem to heart. Perhaps this discontent is playing a helpful part in our social development. If so, it will doubtless be duly counterbalanced and assimilated. But if any one in these days is out in the cyclone instead of in the calm spot, it is the man who is whetting class hatred among the labouring classes with the proud assurance that he is serving justice. There are surely labour problems in abundance. God knows that the whole social world groaneth and travaileth under the weight of the labouring man's burden. But how shall these social problems be solved? Is it consistent with faith in the divine order to try to pull society apart from the outside and rearrange it? Shall these problems be solved by abstract reasoning, or shall social regeneration come "without observation," silently, steadily, without let or hindrance, from injustice to justice, from class hatred to class love?

"What! stand apart and let evolution do it all?" scornfully exclaims the revolutionist. "No, not evolution," the genuine believer in the divine order would reply, "but the Power out of whose advancing order evolution from lower to higher proceeds."

We must agree that if that order be complete it includes the social organism as surely, yea, far more surely, than it includes the entire life of the plant from seed to fruit, or that of the animal from cell to maturity. To trust in the divine order would not be to stand aside and see things work. That would be to misunderstand evolution, which is not a mechanical device that operates without co-operation. The point is, that if one believes in a higher order it is inconsistent, if not a waste of energy, to try to reform the world from outside. The believer in the higher order should co-operate with that order in accordance with its laws of change. He should seek causes, origins; and substitute for coercion the finer energies of education.

One should not then misjudge, for there may be those who are really consistent. The fact that one creates no excitement by one's good works does not prove that one is inactive. For the power may be expended in a different way. The right hand is not informed of the deeds of the left. Fecundative ideas are being sown. When the

fruit of these is seen none may be able to tell who sowed the seed.

There are those, however, whose attitude is the opposite of the anxious attitude before described. In their immoderate reaction from the old conception of life as a warfare of good and evil, where one must constantly fight the good fight, they have fallen into optimistic inertia. They believe themselves to be monists, yet they are really dualists. The inner life of repose is one fact, the struggling world of social inequalities is another fact. The problem of evil is ignored. *Laissez-faire* optimism masquerades as faith and apathetically lies down in luxurious ease, with the complacent affirmation that all will come out right. The general statement is made that "the world is all right," but nothing is done to benefit society.

This is really egoism. Egoism sees the calm spot for itself only and rests content. Altruism sees it for humanity and is filled with gladness. "Invertebrate optimism" knows it only as an opinion; with one who truly possesses it this faith is life-giving power. With many, however, egoism is only a transition stage. No one who has really had an intuition of the divine order can long remain satisfied and inert. The first impulse of those who behold the great truth is to share it with the world. The mistake is often one of method rather than of insight.

Let us make the illustration more private and near. Imagine yourself adrift in that terrific storm which every soul has buffeted, the cyclone of physical sensation. Whether engaged in contest with passion, at the mercy of emotion, or enveloped in excruciating consciousness of one's nerves, everybody knows what it is to be so baffled that, for the time being, there seems to be only the storm; no sunlight, no compensation, no higher power to call upon for help. How strong is the temptation under such circumstances to yield to fear, to fight the impulse, or condemn one's self for having it! Many times one sinks more deeply into the trough of the subjective sea, into the consciousness of sensation, until with the despair of the drowning man one yields to the impetus of the waves.

Nothing is more natural than to fight our impulses, yet nothing is farther from spiritual faith. The more severe the experience, the more calm and composed should we be. To fight the animal within us is to increase the fury of the storm; but to trust, to be calm even when the ship of life is apparently about to sink for ever, is to discover that oil of peace which stills the troubled waters and gradually lessens the fury of the gale.

When winds are raging o'er the upper ocean
And billows wild contend with angry roar,

'T is said, far down beneath the wild commotion,
That peaceful stillness reigneth evermore.

In all experiences of life, these alternatives are open before us, these two kinds of weather. We may rage and foam with the gale, or live in the blue sky above, where we may look upon the raging elements in perfect peace. From the point of view of that faith which is truly faithful there is nothing to fear. The storm typifies the world of time and space, beyond which is the eternal calm spot of the kingdom of God. From below all seems dark. From above all is placid, and one may well afford to let the storm rage, let it subside when it will. For what has the soul to do with that? The soul's part is to be still and know that it is God who is carrying all things forward; to know that one should live in the consciousness of the ideal, not in servitude to its birth-pains.

Far, far away the world of passion dieth,
And loving thoughts rise calm and peacefully;
And no rude storm, how fierce soe'er it flieth,
Disturbs the soul that dwells, O Lord, in Thee.

It is not the man who works for immediate results, or who makes a noise in the world, who exemplifies the true faith, but he whose conduct reveals the still, deep, but far more effective energy of the spirit. The same is true of genuine

sympathy. Some people are deemed unsympathetic because they do not condole and lament. But to lament is to steer out into the storm. If you are to help you must retain the clear vision, be where you can command the power which shall aid the friend in distress. True love—and that is another term for sympathy—seeks to do that which is for the loved one's greatest good, whether or not it seems to the onlooker to be the greatest. And love is wise, it is calm; it is very far from being what some mistake for it—that flighty emotion which is seemingly so sympathetic.

In deepest truth this larger faith inspires the only real sympathy. It sends forth that contagious peace which soothes the soul. It is a vision of the eternal or ideal fitness of things, a source of unspeakable joy. It is a highly developed, composite mental attitude, absorbing what is best in many points of view which lead to it. It is a synthesis of the contemplative and the active life. To possess this eternal calm within is to know how to act as only the higher wisdom acts. A man shall not attain it until he has been torn and buffeted, until he knows what it is to doubt and struggle, to press far beyond mere belief to the point where he actually knows because he has lived,—because he *is*, not merely seems to be, poised.

In order to show that adequate consciousness

of the divine order is no mere emotion or feeling, we need only ask the test question, Is the centre of the universe comparable to an emotional state? Spiritual faith holds that it is not: that it is stable, strong, and steady. It is said to be a calm, unruffled state where the emotions obey the will's behest as a well-disciplined army obeys its general. The universe is organised, and its heart is the centre of all organisation. From that centre all life goes forth, all events are seen, but the centre is not itself swayed by the upheavals outside.

He has lived and thought to little advantage who has not learned that no state of mind is more deceptive than unscrutinised feeling. No man is more apt to go to excess, none is so easily led astray, none is so lacking in poise as he who is governed by his emotions. Such a man lives in the calm spot only when in the presence of a well-poised soul. At other times he has no staying power. The only staying power for such a man must come through the understanding, for it needs no argument to show that, as noble as it may be to feel or to perceive, it is far nobler to classify and discriminate between feelings and perceptions, to be not only intuitive but also philosophical.

The spirit comes first, but that which is spiritual is also rational. The divine order is rational through and through. To seek the ultimate rea-

son of things is to enter more deeply into their spirit. To be well-poised is both to feel the spirit and know the law or reason. Knowledge is power, and no knowledge is so potent as acquaintance with the deep reason of things whose law is the divine order.

We make permanent progress only so far as we understand: for emotion may be, and usually is, largely superficial and passing, while thought is deep and abiding. It is only when we compare visions and feelings to learn their law that we make them truly our own. We must discriminate between feelings in order to know which ones to choose as ideals or ends of actions.

To aspire, to open the soul and worship, is one way to enter the calm spot, but the intellectual method is as truly another. No result is more beneficial than the calm, searching power of philosophical thought, for by such thinking we master experience, we discover the law, we grasp the eternal reason. A point once gained by this process is gained once for all. A new experience may deprive you of your poise, but it cannot rob you of your knowledge. Suppose, for example, it is a time when one must meet a difficult problem in daily life. Let it be a department of one's nature not yet understood. Sit down for an hour's calm, systematic thought, and you will find that a spirit of repose fell upon you while you were

thinking. For true thought is the comprehension of things in the light of cause and effect, and in relation to law, order, reality. If you view your troubles from the standpoint of the upheaval which produced them, and of that which underlay the upheavals, you gain command over them. There is quickening energy in discriminative thought which no calculation can measure. Ignorance is bondage. The truth shall set men free. No man faces a danger or a hardship with so much composure as he who understands it through and through. Intuition may forewarn and guidance forearm, but as high as our spiritual vision may carry us there is an added power when we have not only beheld but actually stood on the mountain-top; when we not only feel the peace but know the law.

Some have conceived the divine order as a means for the realisation of goodness and have become so absorbed in contemplation of the end that they have lost sight of the means. "All is good," and this is no doubt a true insight as far as it goes. But they then add, "There is no evil," and this amounts to a denial of the conditions whereby man gradually evolves from disorder to order. To deny the lower order is to misunderstand the higher. To classify evil as illusion is to overlook the significance of man's moral struggles. The larger faith in the divine order acknowledges the

actuality of evil, that is, the contests of lower and higher, but looks beneath and beyond the evil that men do to see how the universe turns even the evil to account. For the larger faith is inspired by love of facts as well as by devotion to goodness.

He who can look at the darkest side of life, acknowledge the discord and injustice in the world, yet see the unity of life, has penetrated far nearer the real heart of things than the mystic who denies and ignores.

If the mechanical theory were universally true, then scientific monism, or the theory which views the world as one physical piece, would be a correct philosophy. If the mystic's vision were wholly true, then it would be right to affirm that only God exists. But, unfortunately for the advocates of these doctrines, all this is true, and far more. The theory of nature must be qualified by the vision of the seer, and the seer's vision must be tested by scientific reason.

In certain respects the universe may be compared to a mechanism. In other respects this figure is entirely inadequate, and it would be far more correct to compare it to an organism. The organic world is composed of living beings, not of automata. Automatism be may true of a certain plane of life, but above that plane there is the world of efficacious consciousness of various

types. It would obviously be irrational to apply any general term to the universe which does not include the highest type of experience. It is too early to say what that type is, except that it is akin to the higher consciousness in man, the intuitions of a superior order of being. The structure of the world must be fine and pure enough to account for the highest beings in it. The orderliness of things includes the highest guidance known to the soul. If, therefore, we describe the universe as mechanical, in the lowest domain, we should not forget to add that it is also spiritual. Laws which hold true in the organic world may be surpassed by the laws of consciousness. That which cannot be accomplished by ordinary consciousness, may be wrought by consciousness of a superior type.

It is true that, given such a world as the present natural system, it is not only possible to describe it in terms of exact law, but even to predict its phenomena with mathematical accuracy. But that does not show that the same determinations extend beyond the domain of nature. Given the character of the higher order, we might also be able to make predictions which would hold within that order. It is rational to think that, the more knowledge we possess, the more accurately we can describe the system of things. But it is also true that the more wisdom we possess the less in-

clined are we to hazard either predictions or generalisations about the upper realm of life where freedom reigns. In the higher realm there may be far more room for choice, variations, novelties, and individual creative work than we suspect. That which now seems hard and fixed may prove yielding and fluid when approached from the level of superior powers. What is superstitiously called "fate," here below, may appear decidedly flexible to those who are outside of its conditioning stream. So-called "chance" events may be due to the activity of a superior wisdom. It is easy, of course, to indulge in such reflections. But what is already known about superior types of experience furnishes strong reason for putting in these qualifying suggestions.

It is well occasionally to pass beyond the conception of the universe as the field of rigidly mathematical principles, and regard it from the point of view of will, wisdom, higher interests. In the higher world, many tendencies may be revealed which shall give an unexpected turn to events. We are as likely to find new elements as the chemist who performs exact experiments where he deems the result as certain as "two and two are four." Yet this we may say with confidence: Whatever the future reveals, we believe that these new elements will be of the same hidden substance as the old. The unknown will, we

hope, assume its place beside the familiar. The divine order, even spiritually considered, may therefore be deemed certain in a sense in which a machine is not.

The possibility that profounder readjustments than we can predict may come, gives new significance to the fact that all our experience is relative; it shows that all comparisons are confessions of ignorance. Even ultimate ideals and supposed "absolute standards" may give way to that which is now beyond comprehension. In our higher moments we may be unwittingly seeking that which lies even beyond the so-called "unattainable."

To illustrate: Here is a company of people who come forward with a new discovery, or a so-called "revelation," heralded as "the greatest the world has seen," "final," "complete." But how do we know what may be revealed in five years, in fifty, or a hundred years? Life on our earth may be young as yet. Meanwhile there are other planets, some of which may be peopled by beings far in advance of ourselves. There may be systems on systems of worlds in other universes where our knowledge is looked on as child's play. We may some time visit these worlds and enjoy experiences largely differing from our present existence. Who shall now assume to ascribe limits to human experience and human knowledge?

Look out into the starry heavens on a clear,

brilliant night, and try to picture to yourself the immensity of the universe, the possible scope even of the physical portion of the divine order. You can only stand in adoring wonder, awestruck at the mere suggestion. Now turn to the claims of men, to the books, systems, and schemes which assume to understand all this. How petty and absurd seems their extravagant boastfulness!

Such thoughts remind us that our acquaintance with the divine order rests not alone upon knowledge but upon faith. It is not a science of prediction but a ground of hope. We cannot tell precisely what is coming to-morrow. We can only say, Come what may, we know that God will still be here and His universe will still be orderly. We shall not have less but more than we possess to-day. Organism is more than mechanism. Freedom is more than fate. Possibility is richer than certainty.

Thus, belief in the divine order is, in a sense, taking the universe on trust. When we enter the calm spot of eternal vision, we believe that, come what may, though the physical world be destroyed, there is a higher spiritual world where all that is truest and dearest shall hold fast. Persecutions may come, torture, even death. The cyclone may gradually encroach upon the calm spot until only a point remains. We may feel ourselves sinking beneath the waves, beholding in vision all we are

and all that we might have been, yet the spaceless, timeless spot will still be there, unmoved, unharmed, untouched. For even if, in our direst straits, we let go our hold and deny the Father, He will not abandon us; and in our very denial we may at last truly know Him.

Thus we stand at the centre of a circle and look out toward the circumference. There is no escape in any direction. Wherever we go, wherever we look, that new position or that new range of vision becomes a new circle whose centre and circumference are within the divine order. Law is true and love is true. Evolution is a fact and permanency is a fact. There is not only eternity, but time; not merely end and aim, but method and realisation; not only the peace, but the struggle; not alone the calm spot, but the storm; the dream with its lesson and the interpretation with its lesson also; the feeling and the thought about it; the lower and the higher, and the union of the two; the meaning of evolution as a whole and its meaning in part, in types, times, and epochs, in worlds and systems of worlds.

Moreover, there is the moral as well as the organic order. There is the spiritual which transfigures the moral. There is truth for truth's sake; art, virtue, individuality, society, as ends in themselves; and so on through countless phases of our multiform existence.

Your mystical vision of the unity of life is only one point of view. The microscopic analysis of life's contrasts, strifes, and warfare is as truly another. There is an experience in the storm and another in the calm. Who can afford to miss either?

There is self and there is God, and we must have both. The divine order is adequately known only through acquaintance with human disorder. The divine tide moves onward as resistlessly as the sun disappears at the close of day. Possibly God could command the sun to stand still, but He could not command His own orderly life-flow to cease. If there were only this life-flow as God perceives it, or as an angel may know it on some far-off planet, we might possibly be able to make predictions. But always and ever, in all places and at all times, there is the human and the divine, the changing and the unchanging: and the great joy of life is to study their manifold mutual adjustments.

Any point of view is likely to lead us to excess if we pursue that alone. We might, for example, regard the divine order as a perpetual flux, deeming that order itself progressive. And so it may be, relatively speaking. But our thought would have to pause somewhere. For there must be a calm spot, which, "unmoved," as Aristotle phrased it, "moves the world." There must be an eternal centre of poise, balance, harmony, which shall prevent the flux from becoming either mere return

unto itself, as the ancients conceived, mere movement with no gain, or a gradual regress towards chaos. The universe may be as fluid, as full of chance and experiment as you like, if only it be not wholly so. God may be as human, as present, and personal as you like, provided only that He be more than human, more than any revelation of Him, and more than a mere personality.

In other words, the hypothesis of a divine order compels us to believe that God is all that science and religion, the philanthropist and the prophet say He is, and also all that the philosopher finds Him to be. That is, God is both immanent and transcendent. He is the present life, activity, resident movement of the divine order, present in the storms and watchful in the conscience of man; and He is wise and poised, self-existent and all-containing in that eternal realm where undisturbable harmony reigns.

The divine order is perfect in detail as well as at large. Viewed from the standpoint of vegetal life, it is the entire vegetative system which governs the plant in its growth from cell to cell. It includes the wonderful instincts and tendencies which guard animal life in the long evolution from simplicity to complexity, which pertain to the existence of each individual but also to the welfare of the species. Seen in detail, the divine order is well illustrated by the ever-faithful tendency to

regain health and harmony that guards every ill which besets animal life. There is provision for every hurt, every deviation from the ordinary, every calamity. As surely as water seeks its level, so does every organ in the divine order seek to regain its pristine harmony.

Do you realise what this great fact implies in reference to human life? It means that there is a tendency in every error to fulfil itself in the truth, that every wrong tends to right itself, every injury to heal, whether it be physical, individual, social, political, national, or racial. It means that when my brother does wrong it is not incumbent upon me to correct him, to fight the evil, or condemn it in public. If anything is to be learned from his action—well and good. But I must first remember that there is a tendency in the divine order to provide for that wrong. My brother's conscience will sufficiently condemn him. His own moral organism will set to work to remedy the ill. Future thought and experience will enable him to profit by his error. Memory will constantly remind him of it, as long as he ought to be reminded. It is not for me to be anxious. It is not for me to usurp the functions of the moral order. Since the universe is moral I have every reason to trust. My part is to help, if help be needed, where opportunity for moral co-operation offers itself. Anything more would be officious.

Here is where we see the true relationship between the divine and the human. The fact that the human is here, an organic part of the divine order, proves it to be of worth. But the true worth of the human is only found in organic relation. The divine order is here; it need not be sought or created. All the provisions are made, the instincts are at hand, and the ideals are present. God will do His part, and nothing can hinder or defeat Him. Our part is to learn the nature, tendencies, laws, and instincts of the divine organism, that we may move with, not against, them.

In the case of my brother who does wrong, I must recognise the soul, the partly fulfilled ideal: I must try to see what he really endeavoured to do when he thought it would not be so very bad if he sinned. I must know him in this deed better than he knows himself. I must view his life in the light of the broadest perspective, see it as a far-sighted adjustment of means to ends. Recognising the idealising tendency, I must call it out and emphasise it.

This is far from excusing the wrong or classifying it as right. It is rather like the discovery of a person's error who should say, "Two and one are four, or Two and three are four." These are and always will be erroneous statements. But they err by defect and excess. There is one unit too few in the

first case; one too many in the second. The person was trying to say, "Two and two are four." That is the divine order. But the divine order is also rich enough to hold all the errors which all men may make, and still hold the truth. It is sound enough to withstand all the wrongs which all men may commit, yet be good. In the same way, any soul is pure enough to endure the contaminations of the vilest life a man may lead. At the eleventh hour, or even later, a reaction will set in which will cleanse the ugliest spot. For our extremest experiences are provided for as surely as our mildest. This is why we have such profound faith in God, why we do not agree with the anxious missionary and the troubled ethical culturist. We believe that there is no calamity so great that it can impede the even flow of the great life-current, no crime so terrible that it can mar the beauty of the divine order.

Action and reaction, supply and demand, negative and positive, lower and higher—all these and countless other dualities are typical of the adjustments within the divine order by which every need is met. The reaction which rights the wrong is as sure a fact in the moral cosmos as the wrong which invites it. Emblazon this upon your memory; murder will out. Crime actually attracts its cosmic punishment, wrong invites right, error beckons truth.

Do not, then, impede the current. Get yourself out of the way. Move with the divine tide. Trust in the Father. If the weather be foggy, remember the blue sky above. If you are in the throes of a hurricane, steer for the calm spot. That which is threatening from the superficial point of view is promising from the transcendental. Remember that this superficial moment, this present cyclone, although a part of reality, is merely a fragment of it and is not to be understood out of relation. Therefore, cherish your experiences, catalogue your moods, collect your apparently disjointed data. For they belong to a higher unity than any one experience, any one point of view or doctrine can reveal. The true unity is transcendental, that is, it resides in the eternal world. It is like the unity of the soul, too comprehensive for any one moment to seize upon. Yet we know that in all deep moments we are united with that unity, we are one with that soul, members of one another, fellow-workers with God, functions in the divine order.

To find the divine order is, therefore, to find the kingdom of heaven, to which all things shall be added. For the divine order is that eternal realm encompassing, vivifying, and holding in a system all beings, worlds, forces, and evolutions, yet is not bound by that which it fills and sustains. In the same place and at the same instant both the

calm spot and the storm are present. Every storm centre is also a centre of peace for those who are acquainted with the divine order. And every centre of peace is a way of approach to that divine beauty, wisdom, truth to which every soul is heir. Recognition of that inheritance is recognition of the great fact which it has been the object of this chapter to emphasise, namely, that it is God who is accomplishing it all, God who guides the universe, God who inspires the soul.

CHAPTER VI

LINES OF APPROACH

IT would be difficult for the man of spiritual faith to tell when and how he began to believe in the spiritual order of things. The only conclusive evidence of a spiritual law is the appeal to experience; and experience is a matter of growth. Another dimension is added to life when spiritual faith becomes strong. This added world brings its own evidence and must be tested by its own standards. Hence questions of "how" and "when" do not apply, but belong rather to the world of space and time. To believe in an eternal order as a vitally real part of one's life, as the highest domain of the soul, is also to take a different view of the relative importance of this world. Just because one believes in a region which is made known according to its own laws, arguments based on sense-perception are not regarded as fundamental. The faith of the one who has had evidence of higher things is sure to be scorned by one who has had no glimmering of anything beyond what he can physically see and touch. It is

the peculiar kind of experience, rather than any reasonings in its behalf, which is of most consequence. The one who tries to prove that there is a spiritual order to a person who has not this peculiar evidence to fall back upon, is sure to put himself in a ridiculous light.

Still, there is an evolution of spiritual faith, and as the years pass one can look back and discover some of the approaches, and these hints may guide those who are making the same transition. The simple fact is that the soul awoke one day to find itself conscious of an additional element in life. Then the mind began to see the coherency of things where it once saw chaos. Very likely it was some process of inductive reasoning which prepared the way. For example, the discovery of the universality of law may have been the starting-point. It is a momentous occasion when the mind sees the unity of things from the point of view of law. Previously one had a sort of vague idea that it was possible to sin and not suffer, or that, having sinned, one could shift the burden of responsibility upon another by accepting a saving creed. To find that every thought and every act tends to bring its own reaction by a law as natural as that which characterises the fall of an apple is to see the whole sphere of human existence in a new light. The unity of law clearly understood, it is possible to advance to greater insights.

The satisfactory solution of the problem of evil is perhaps the next step. For if law reigns everywhere, if our conduct is conditioned by consciousness, it is clear that evil is relative to inner development; consequently evil ceases to exist for us in so far as we remedy the defects of thought and conduct. That is, we learn that the responsibility rests with man individually, not with the universe. The universe gives back action for action. If we misuse our powers we suffer accordingly. But when we co-operate with the powers which make for harmony we turn everything to good. We may still have much that is unregenerate in us. We may still wonder how those who are immersed in the flesh are to be quickened. But, as we now see the law, the way of life is no longer mysterious; we no longer rebel, but begin to modify our little world by changing our attitude toward the universe. He who can regard the hurricane of passion in his own life and see the love of God therein, find the calm spot of spiritual faith, has made a long advance toward understanding the universe as the domain of the Spirit.

Again, the approach to the larger faith is somewhat like this: The mind is haunted by an ideal and laments because life cannot at once be shaped for its realisation. Creatures of desire, impulsive, impatient, we see objects ahead and are eager to

possess them immediately. Accordingly we get down in the dust and push, struggle to force things into line. We make life miserable not only for ourselves, but for all who are connected with our impatient ambition. It is true, we succeed in raising a dust. But in general the attempt is a pitiful failure. Therefore we fall back disheartened, and long for a universe which offers "ideal" conditions.

Anon, events begin to take shape so that we are able to carry out our wish under particularly favourable circumstances. We look back and note how unfavourable were the circumstances in which we tried to force things into line. We see that events have worked out better than we could have planned. There seems to be a "fitness" in things which surpasses our keenest insight. Accordingly we cherish the facts and press on, perhaps to make the same mistake and learn the same lesson a dozen times, until, at last, we begin to see that there is a law revealed in such experiences. What we called "luck" seems to be no more the work of chance than the awakening of spring after the long sleep of winter. Things somehow work together. There is a tide in the affairs of men whose current we may take when it serves, if we have the patience to watch and wait. Apparently our own will is little more than a hindrance till the right time comes. We are able to make life miserable

by our impatience, but we cannot change the order of life's coming and going. We are free to let the opportunity slip, but other occasions come. The wealth of the universe is abundant, but we must learn to fall in line with its blessings. How foolish our lamentations seem in the face of such bounty! How unwise to try to run the universe when such an attempt is like Dame Partington's endeavours to sweep back the Atlantic Ocean! Emerson says, "I am constrained every moment to acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine."

The same law of fulfilment of cherished desires is exemplified in our relations with our fellows. Here is a man, for example, who is out of employment but who longs to do a great work. Failure seems to be his fate everywhere. Balked in his chosen interest, he seeks employment in the conventional way. He wearily walks the streets in his search, presents letters of introduction, exerts pressure, and persuades others to use their influence. But all in vain. No one seems kind. The law of supply and demand has apparently been repealed. Every door is closed until, from an unexpected source, some one comes who is in need of precisely such a worker, and the new occupation proves to be the open door to the long-cherished work. What waste of energy were the weary weeks of searching and straining! The trouble was with the seeker, not with the world. In the

economy of the universe there was a need and a time. When the right time came, everything yielded in a wonderful way.

The discovery of this higher law is succeeded by the conclusion that one may as well depend on the course of events and spare one's self the friction and worry. For if desire indicates probability of fulfilment, why not let our blessings come in their own way, why not await favourable occasions? As matter of fact, many have found that the more they trust to the sources of spiritual supply the more everything tends to be provided. The most striking fact in the lives of those who live by spiritual faith is the concord of events and persons. Congenial associates are found at times when they are most needed. Financial resources are provided in the face of prospects which seemed utterly unfavourable. Sometimes one's faith is tested to the utmost. But the way never fails to open, and at a time which later proves to have been most favourable for the development of all concerned. The way opens for the realisation of ideals which seemed "too good to be true." The conscious will plays less and less part. One ceases to plan, for no plans are needed. One reduces life to fidelity to the guidance immediately at hand. One asks for help and help comes.[1] One seeks

[1] For the best explanation of prayer, see James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 466.

light and light is given. More and more one sees that there is a deep current in things whereby all is carried forward. If one moves with that current all is provided, one need be concerned with nothing else. Sometimes the way is dark, but when the sky clears again one sees why it was dark, why it was better to work out a certain problem by one's self than have it solved for one.

Thus the soul gradually grows in faith as the lessons of experience are learned. The great fact is that the supreme evidence is empirical. It is a question of understanding just such lives as yours and mine. When we see the law of our life we can begin to adapt our conduct to it. To begin to live faithfully is to add to our faith.

At this point the critic is ready to break in with the remark that these are trivial experiences which the mind interprets as it pleases. They are explicable in purely naturalistic terms, and it is folly to regard the alleged "working of all things together" as aught more than a series of coincidences.

To this I reply that evidences of "guidance" may indeed seem trivial to one who has not enjoyed such an experience. All through the ages those who have claimed to be "led," to behold an inner light, have been adversely criticised by the unillumined. But trivial or not, and however these intuitions may be interpreted, they are still

matters of fact in the inner life, they have led to great and noble results, and they are approaches to an experience which is far more consequential. The wise man is at least willing to hear the reports of such guidances with sympathetic ears. If he cannot propose a better explanation than that offered by popular religious believers, he at any rate refrains from denying the facts. To insist that there are no such facts, but simply certain "values," is tacitly to confess that one has not yet been quickened.

Doubtless one should hesitate to settle upon any one theory of spiritual guidance. To declare that God had a specific "plan" covering all the details of an experience which you have just passed through is to assume too much. At any rate, it is jumping forward to the finality of things before the intermediate stages are understood, and it is precisely these stages which we wish to understand. But uncertainty in regard to the specific form in which the guidance comes should not deter one from faith in its coming. Whatever the sceptic says, you know that whereas your life once seemed fragmentary you now behold law, order; you have a principle by which to explain experience. That there is deep truth in this conviction you are assured when you compare notes with people of whatever belief or clime who have had similar experiences.

Even the sceptic will admit that he has had a somewhat analogous experience. Possibly your spiritual vision is unreal to him only because he refuses to examine the evidence. At any rate, you do not doubt the vision because you cannot set forth its beauty in dull prose. If life be both poetry and prose, you see no reason why you should capitulate to the man of prosaic naturalism. If there really is a Spirit which "bloweth where it listeth," one would only expect a response from those whom the Spirit has touched in passing. There are things which we cannot do unless power be given us. There are moments when we are constrained to say: "Give me no credit, what I wrought and what I said came forth from me because I was 'moved.' I tried to repeat the performance, but failed. I tried to tell another how to do it, but could not. All I can say is that I was more than my ordinary self. Doubt as you will, I know that I deeply lived in those great moments, and I must give them place in my philosophy."

The facts and values of what is called "spiritual guidance" are of course susceptible of a variety of interpretations. It is undoubtedly true that they tend to increase in number and efficiency for those who believe in them; whereas scepticism closes the door. Generally speaking, they accompany the more childlike life, the life of sweet

trust and genuine receptivity. They come, too, for those who enjoy a certain amount of solitude and freedom from the tumult of the world. When we are constantly with our fellow-men we depend on their opinions and advice. While we are engaged in absorbing scientific pursuits we have no ear for spiritual whisperings. It is a profoundly suggestive fact that some who have enjoyed a singularly beautiful religious experience during a number of years find themselves cut off from the world of inner guidances when they become devotees of a coldly analytical doctrine which insists on strictly logical proof.

What is the resource when doubt comes? One method is to return to nature in the fullest sense of the word, yield one's self once more to the life of spontaneity. Another is to pursue one's doubts to the end. This is one of the surest approaches to a larger faith. No philosophical exercise is more profitable than the endeavour to trace out the consequences of religious faith. It is the failure to do this which is in large part responsible for the undesirable mysticism and the fanaticism which have sometimes marred spiritual doctrines. It is easy to leap forward to mystical conclusions, and it requires great patience to eliminate false conclusions when the mind is once started on the pantheistic road. To go back and retrace one's steps is to find one's self on a different pathway.

Yet surprisingly profitable discoveries await all who are willing to make the venture.

When religious faith begins to wane it seldom occurs to people that the remedy is not to go in search of another creed, but to scrutinise their old beliefs more closely in order to discover where the structure was weak. The decline in faith was probably not due to a less firm hold upon the facts but to intellectual questionings. Since the trouble was intellectual the resource must be intellectual. While we move swimmingly along it never occurs to us to inquire into the foundations of our faith, to ask ourselves in all seriousness, What are the conditions of religious faith, what are its presuppositions, what is the ideal attitude, and what obstacles beset the pathway of the believer? Never having asked ourselves why we believe in the divine order we are unable to defend our faith when doubts arise. Therefore we ignominiously surrender when we really have the power within us to make good the deficiency.

The present inquiry proceeds on the assumption that the only remedy for poor philosophy is good philosophy. If your general faith collapses you must begin to consider, in detail, what it means to possess sound faith. Take, for instance, some tenet of your childhood's faith and ask in the first place if you really believe it, and if so what it means consistently to live by it in all situations.

Then consider the relation of this precept to other doctrines, consider the facts, the real experiences out of which these precepts grew, and endeavour to ascertain the central principle by which you have lived, by which you are eager to live, at your best moments. It is commonly supposed that such an inquiry weakens faith. On the contrary, it cannot fail to strengthen your convictions provided you are true both to the facts and the doctrines, if you are willing to enlarge your faith by putting it through the tests of thought.

As an exercise in this kind of philosophising, let us ask, What are the great tenets of spiritual faith? As this question would be variously answered by different individuals in different ages, let us offer a series of answers which would be given by an average religious devotee at the present time.

1. First stands the belief in God as unfailing love, eternal, all-wise, beneficent, immanent yet transcendent. God for the world of modern faith is "in His world" in a more intimate sense than was possible until the rise of the philosophy of evolution.

2. The existence of human souls as sons of God, immortal spirits. Some would dispute this proposition, as immortality is supposed to be conferred when the soul has in truth become a son of God through conversion, or by the divine grace. But

let us assume universal sonship as most likely to prove consistent with the divine love.

3. The existence of a superior realm, a spiritual world, which environs the present existence. For the modern world there is no space between the kingdom of heaven on earth, and the kingdom of the spirit wherein the Father is more fully manifested.

4. The existence of a moral law, a tendency toward the right such that, in the end, justice shall be done, all men shall be free.

5. The presence within man of a witness, a monitor, a guidance which indicates the pathway of the right. Some would describe this as conscience, others would more broadly characterise it as the "inner light."

6. The belief that there is power, wisdom to meet any possible situation; that the divine love never fails. "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." "Though he slay me yet will I trust him."

Put in other terms, the general presupposition of spiritual faith is that there is a divine order, a universal system which exemplifies law yet is inspired by love; which springs from infinite wisdom, and is unchangeable, therefore eternal. Another presupposition is that error, struggle, and suffering are relatively superficial, ephemeral. That is, evil is a temporary actuality, not an eternal reality. However great the wrong, how-

ever far reaching the conflict, evil does not disturb the ultimate order of things, nor their laws: the universe at heart is unhurt, "the infinite lies wrapt in smiling repose." Many would of course doubt this proposition, but it serves to typify a certain faith, and that is all that is required in order to afford a test for the faith of the critic. Many would go much farther and declare that the fact that the universe is a divine order shows that the whole course of life is purposive. Thus they would account for spiritual guidances. It would be but one step more to assert that all experience is for the development of the soul, hence all life is in reality a spiritual unity, the unity of your experience and the unity of mine are harmonious with the divine ideal.

If the truth-seeker be unable to accept such a broad faith, let him try to think out to its logical terminus the theory of the divine grace as choosing whom it will and relegating all other souls to endless torment. Such a theological excursion is almost impossible nowadays. For we are really beginning to believe that God is just, that He is truly the Father of love. Salvation is not limited by time, or to this world—so many now maintain. There are "no lost souls" in the ultimate sense of the word. The divine grace is the omnipresent Spirit, ever ready to quicken all who aspire, who hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Consequently, true religious zeal ought to concern itself with the conditions whereby the immediate presence is made known. There is no longer any reason for painting the blackness of sin.

Sharply contrasted with belief in the partiality and miraculous character of the divine grace is the theory in which emphasis is placed solely upon human action and reaction. We are precisely what the past has made us. We are the victims of our own folly, our "Karma." Through all the universe rigid law reigns. There is no escape except by returning the exact mathematical equivalent of every misdeed. We attract what we are like, what we believe in. According to our state of development everything is rendered unto us. That which is for us gravitates to us. We have what we "need" for our development. Everything depends on ourselves, on the way we take life. If we do not take advantage of our opportunities now, they will recur in more severe form. Thus, ever on and on, till we are compelled to choose the pathway of the higher life.

To pursue such a creed to the end is to discover that it leaves God out of account and is a purely personal method of salvation. This creed really amounts to fatalism. What we are said to "need" and must suffer turns out to be the result of our own misconduct which we superstitiously reverence instead of overcoming. If we "need" it at

all it must be to show us that we are the victims of our own folly when we hold such a faith. For this conception of life attains unity at the expense of the freer activities of the spirit. It emphasises the fate-driven circumstance rather than the higher possibility. Carried to its logical end, it is a purely mechanical conception in which the soul amounts to little more than a magnet, round which thoughts and deeds collect as tacks are drawn by a magnetic current. All that the doctrine emphasises is doubtless true—in its own sphere. But universally applied it is far from adequate. We are indeed bound by hereditary ties, by action and reaction. We reap what we sow, and there is fitness between supply and demand. But unless we are morally free, how could we accept the "opportunities" that are "attracted" to us?

There is a more pleasing kind of religious faith which declares that each of us is in the best possible situation. The objection to this doctrine is that it assumes too much, it forgets the conditions of human life. It may well be that there is guidance for each of us. If we always took the divine advice, if we had always taken it—without a single exception—we could then perhaps declare that our present life is the best fruition of the best possible past. But who can make such an enormous claim? The utmost that we can say

of our fellows is that most of them do *about* as well as they know, about as well as we could do under the same circumstances. Unless we are to deny the very law of our being, we must acknowledge that we are constantly in the presence of a lower and a higher. The whole significance of the divine guidance lies in the fact that we can accept or reject it. My present opportunity is not "best" unless I make it so by triumphing over a worst. Only in case God acted through me so that no act ever sprang from myself could it strictly be said that my life could not have been better than it is.

Having, then, tested the presuppositions of one's faith by comparison with conflicting doctrines, the next step is to consider the ideal attitude. Here, again, a different answer would be given by each believer. But let us say that in general the ideal of spiritual faith is to live a poised, moderate life, so characterised by inner calmness, self-possession, wisdom, love, that one will be ready to meet any circumstance with composure, be it an accident, sorrow, great suffering, or an occasion for self-denying service. The first essential is inner calmness, peace, alertness to see what to do, insight. The second is readiness to act, practicality. The third is readiness to serve.

Spiritual faith, therefore, begins at home. Applied, it is adaptability to any occasion, however trying, such that it shall prove to be a spiritual

opportunity. The essential is to believe though all seems dark, even where everything points to failure. When in doubt, one should be true to the best one knows. When one does not know what to do to-morrow, or next year, one should do that which is nearest as well as it can be done. Fidelity to the present duty, even if it fail to satisfy, is the open door to the freer life.

But spiritual faith is also social, and can only be complete in so far as it shares the blessings of the inner life. The first obstacle that is met when one tries to be true to one's faith is duality, the conflict of self, struggle with doubt and selfishness. But the real problem is social injustice, oppression, and the rest; the question, namely, How shall one deal with the dogmatism, ignorance, materialism, and selfishness of the world? It is easy to be self-possessed and trustful in an environment which does not cause the brow to ruffle. That which sometimes passes as faith is indolence or selfishness at heart, the love of luxurious ease. Faith is faith when it does something. Without works it is indeed dead. Our age more and more insists on the social test.

Yet even as personally considered, faith is not certain till it has been severely tested. With the majority it is merely intellectual until it has come face to face with sorrow, suffering, and the separation from loved ones. To have faith till one finds

one's place in life is a severe ordeal, to await the coming of truth when one hungers and thirsts for knowledge; and above all to meet the tests which the lack of money brings. Fortunate is he who knows what poverty is.

Then there is the temporal factor. The eye of faith sees quickly and far, but the flesh is unyielding, and regeneration is slow. Outer circumstance is in perpetual conflict with spiritual faith. The wisest prophet is doomed to disappointment. It is well for us if we at least know the law of regeneration, namely, from within outward; first the ideal, then the intellectual understanding of it, and finally the readjustment of external circumstance. It is long to wait until the other things are added—when we have found the inner kingdom of peace and begun to seek the righteousness of God.

The particular subjective factor of spiritual faith is admonition, illumination, "guidance." Nothing is more sure than the true guidance, yet experience is the only criterion which reveals the deceits of that subtle personal sentiment which masquerades as divine intuition. There are manifold illusions due to personal preference, morbid psychological conditions, pathological and other deflecting physical influences. The residuum is worth working for. But that there is no infallible guidance, no intuition which makes itself known

once for all, without the contrasts of conflicting experiences, is one of the profoundest truths of the inner life. It is only by philosophical interpretation that one at last knows what intuition is, what it implies as a guide to spiritual faith.

Faith passes through many stages from childhood to maturity. Those who are passing to manhood's faith are apt to look with regret upon people who can still believe without a doubt. But is it really true that when "ignorance is bliss 't is folly to be wise"? Is faith really itself when it is naïve, uncritical, non-rational? How can we expect it to be universal until we have fully taken it up into the understanding, found ourselves still in possession of it after we have considered the great questions of critical thought? Moreover, there are conflicting faiths and interpretations of faiths. One must either have a criterion by which to judge these, or fall back into that rigid dogmatism which so often characterises the religious believer.

Another important consideration in the study of spiritual experience is the fact that such experience occurs under certain conditions. There are two points of view from which such conditions may be regarded. They may seem to be mere limitations and to exclude the soul from knowledge of reality or, understood, they may prove to be the most direct channels of communion with the higher

order. It may be that some conditions so far affect our consciousness that we can see nothing as it really is—from that point of view. But that does not prove that from all points of view reality is obscure. A wall which shuts out light may yet admit the passage of intelligible sound vibrations. The X-ray penetrates where all is otherwise dark to us. Any limitation may, for all we know, be a limitation only until a greater power is discovered which can overcome it. That which seems impossible on a lower plane may seem like a mere commonplace on a higher.

To insist that all limitations are absolute would be theoretically to shut God out of communion with His world. If there be any walls through which God cannot pass, He is weak and finite in the extreme. The spiritual seer starts from the opposite point of view, and tells us that the Spirit "bloweth where it listeth," it has a law of its own. At first sight this seems like lawnessness, but it is simply a higher law. In one condition it is true that what I see and feel is limited by my state of body and mind. In another condition these media have nothing to do with it. Gravity is an unchangeable law in its own field. But gravity can be overcome. On a cloudy day the world looks dark. But there are mountain tops far above the clouds, whence one may look into the boundless blue empyrean.

To one who understands their deflecting power, even pathological conditions may be no obstacle; for the mind is able consciously to transcend them, since there are two levels of consciousness as sharply contrasted as the calm spot and the hurricane which rages around it. One might almost say that the discovery of the two planes of consciousness is the foundation of knowledge of the spiritual life. On one plane the mind is more or less painfully aware of imprisoning feelings and other limitations. The soul is under the law, and is extremely conscious of it. On the higher plane the soul lives in the joy of the outcome, is not so much concerned with the process of evolution as with that which evolution is to bring forth. The painful feelings are still there, but they do not imprison. The limitations are still seen, yet from the upper side. The law is as stern as ever, but the soul lives in consciousness of the love which is its fulfilment. On the lower plane one is simply one's self. On the higher the soul is attached to the source of spiritual supply. The majority dwell on the lower plane a large part of the time. Hence their philosophy partakes of its limitations. Even those who have in some measure learned to distinguish between the two types of consciousness are seldom able to attain the higher vision or to hold it for any length of time.

Consciousness of limitations is enough to stagger

any man, if he thinks simply of those. The only way to succeed is to press bravely forward, ride over the environing conditions, and achieve the impossible. One should neither ignore the conditions, nor declare with certain contemporary theorists that "there are no limitations." But philosophically and practically one must remember and take account of the two levels or types of consciousness. For both are real. Both are relative. The truth about life is a synthesis of the total knowledge gained through both.

Aside from its experiential value, the experience has a logical basis. That is to say, it is an entirely defensible hypothesis that there is a mode of intuition which transcends sense perception. Side by side with brain states which condition the mind, there may be spiritual states which are no more hindered by them than the X-ray is impeded by conditions which other rays cannot penetrate. Indeed, it may be questioned if the evidences on which science bases many of its conclusions in regard to the physical world are any more sound than the data of intuition. Our physical senses mislead us till we learn to eliminate subjective factors. In the end, most of us believe that our senses tell us truly. There may be subtle interferences with the spiritual sense, but that is no argument against the final validity of the information it gives. The universal testimony of those

who are spiritually gifted is that a veil is drawn when the inner illumination occurs. Then they realise how greatly we are hampered by the flesh.

Having now briefly considered some of the ideals and conditions of spiritual faith, let us carry our inquiry a stage farther by more explicitly defining the type of faith in the divine order which has here guided us. The definition need only be tentative, but it will serve to bring our inquiry to an issue. Generally speaking, we may say that the divine order is the system which embraces everything, all worlds, every soul, in so far as that which exists bears direct relation to God. The ultimate source or reason for being of the divine order is the character, the constitution of God. The total universe is a system because God is orderly. It is exemplified by law because the power and wisdom which it reveals is systematic, purposive. It has unity because there is no other God, nothing unincluded, because it is the expression of one divine ideal. It is manifold, rich, because it expresses a richly varied life, and the central divine ideal involves many secondary purposes. These purposes include the ideals of all individual souls, and the most minute as well as the most stupendous activities of nature. It is a spiritual order because God is Spirit, invisible, eternal; whereas visible things come and go. It is ethical because God is just, righteous, and wills the best for all

His creatures. The central purpose is the manifestation or full realisation of the divine nature, the perfection of all forms and modes of infinitely varied life, and the perfection of all human beings as sons of God. Yet the divine order is such as to leave scope for the individual experience of an infinite diversity of finite souls. The divine order is eternal in the heavens, but its guiding powers are not far from even the most wayward consciousness of man.

The divine order is the divine reason, as well as the divine love; and one must give each aspect its due. The prime characteristic of Spirit in manifestation is that it assumes a two-fold form. If we bear this in mind and trace out its relationships we shall be able to steer clear of the shoals where many become stranded. God is unity in variety. The universe, partaking of his nature, is also unity in variety. Spiritual vision is essentially insight into the divine unity, the eternal aspect with the temporal left out. The eternal may be known as in a flash, the temporal, by its very nature, can only be known through time. Hence, there must be a gradual working out, or rationalisation of that which, seen under the aspect of eternity, appears as one.

We thus discover the real problem which confronts all who would work out this faith in the divine order in its fulness. What is the relation-

ship of the temporal and the eternal, the rational and the spiritual, the divine and the human? If there be truth, value in both, what shall be the criterion of their unity? Must we await the further vision, till all shall be revealed, or is it possible to develop a philosophy of the divine order in relation to the living present?

By implication, we have already dismissed the alleged solution which sweeps the whole problem aside by declaring that the divine order is absolutely perfect, that man is perfect now. For we are unwilling to relegate to that convenient limbo called "illusion" the very difficulty which we seek to explain, namely, the existence of imperfection in the world. We have also dismissed the popular optimism which asserts that we are even now in the best possible situation, that we could not have acted otherwise. For this robs human life of its real meaning as found through freedom, choice, experiment, mistake, enlightenment, regeneration, and adjustment; it overlooks the fact that the perfect guidance may be ever present without being followed, that we are not fated to obey it. These assertive optimists show by their conduct that they do not believe this absolutism. They constantly speak of the "mistakes" they have made, and they find themselves face to face with practical problems which they must solve. Here is the real test.

The glory of the divine life is that it does not keep its perfection to itself; it shares its love and wisdom with all. Its beauty, its love is found in action, evolution. The divine order is not dead: it is doing something, ever advancing to a new moment of self-expression. This new moment is the great fact. It is far greater for us now than what has been done, or what may be done. There is no stationary perfect, no absolute attainment. If the divine order were absolute it would already be crystallised. The joy of the whole vast organism is that there is something to attain, something yet indetermined. The basis of our faith is not that there is harmony everywhere, but that, though there are storms, there is peace at the centre. The joy of finite life at any moment is that, despite the discord, despite the disloyalty to the divine guidance, the guidance is still with us, however great our sin. Only Jesus can say: "I always do what is well-pleasing in thy sight."

We must clearly understand, then, that the spiritual order as here described is not deemed absolute or stationary. If the world which the seer discovers were literally a perfect whole, where all things were known and all perfection attained, there would surely be no reason why this temporal world should exist. The truth is, so we here maintain, that the divine order includes both the spiritual realm in the eternal sense and the

natural world of every-day life. The natural world is grounded in the divine order, else it could not be. To contemplate is not enough. *We must act.* The whole group of things and beings within the divine order is moving forward. Something is doing, both in heaven and on earth. Perfection is not yet, no, not anywhere. God himself would be incomplete without this time-world; there is actual novelty in His life. The divine order is a society, not a block. God works and we work, and we do not constitute one monotonous whole.

CHAPTER VII

THE SPIRITUAL VISION

THERE are moments in life when we stand in the presence of the divine beauty. That which is sordid and ugly is for the time lost to view. We pass beyond doubt and fear, beyond the prose to the poetry of life, where the exactitudes and the sharp lines of our ordinary occupation are softened, and a gentle radiance falls on all the scene. The details of life's toilsome days are still there, and we stand no less firmly on the substantial earth. Yet there is a unity in our experience which we did not see before, a harmony where we once heard discord, a beneficence where we once felt pain. For the moment there seems to be no mystery; all truth is present, all power is apparently active there. The moment flits, but the memory abides, to remind us that at other times we only partly live. Hence there arises a deep longing to describe by some higher art than poetry or science, painting or music, the beauty, the truth, and joy of that wondrous scene. The attempt to translate the insight into exact

terms clearly convinces the mind that one in truth had a vision of the great beyond, the environing whole, in which ordinary life is but a fragment. One shrinks from making a poetic account of the vision lest the crowd misunderstand and the critics laughingly cry, "Weak sentiment!" Yet it must be that even those who pass scoffingly by feel instantly rebuked for their irreverence. For in one way or another we all confess that life is more than money-making, eating, and sleeping. All our religious institutions are evidences of belief in a higher order of things, and while we scoff with the lips we feel shame in our hearts. The poets and prophets, the great artists and musicians are those who had the courage to speak for the highest, while other men turned weakly aside.

It seems probable that this poetic insight is akin to the experience which has given rise to mysticism in all ages. The language of mysticism has often been far from acceptable. But there is no reason to doubt the reality of the experience which inspires mysticism. To understand the type is to realise how difficult it is to do justice to the great vision. It would be entirely unfair to judge by the letter. The real question is, How happens it that one experience so profoundly impresses the soul? Why does a single insight outweigh the authority of all arguments which apparently make against it?

It is one of the most impressive facts in human life that all through the ages, from the days of ancient India's great seers to the present time, prophets and poets have declared that God was present to their souls in unhampered communion. The vision has been variously described in different ages, and the most conflicting conclusions have been drawn from it. Yet the varied terminology is rather evidence of the universality of the vision than an argument against its reality. There is no good reason to doubt that *some* presence has made itself known. Whether a personal God was supposed to speak, or an exalted spirit; whether a veil was lifted so that the soul could behold the realities of things with unclouded vision, or the subliminal self delivered its messages without revealing their source—at any rate the seer has been in more or less intimate relation with a superior order of being. Hence the language employed, and hence the enthusiasm which must ever seem vain and extravagant to one who has not enjoyed the experience.

The most marked characteristic of the experience in its more conscious form is the temporary lifting of the soul into a purer atmosphere, above the limitations of mundane consciousness. One stands as it were on a mountain summit where neither space nor time impedes the vision. Ages roll before the mind as if they were one, and beheld

in one moment. The world is spread out as if it were all present on a plane surface. What cannot be made known directly is revealed symbolically through pictures, forms, and signs which indicate the trend and meaning of things past and present. Sometimes the vision unfolds spontaneously. Again, one is able to turn at will in various directions to see how things are, or to ask questions and feel the answer rather than hear it; touch the thing itself, not simply behold it afar. The essential truth is describable in symbolical language. But the reality that is seen and felt is the great fact. Hence the mystic confesses his inability to say what he would. This is the tantalising feature of mysticism, and it is sometimes taken as proof that the spiritual vision is a mere blank. One might as well say that there is naught else in the enjoyment of a Beethoven symphony than might be appreciated by reading the score.

To insist that what one can describe is all there was in the vision is to profane it. Common sense should tell any one that a vision which makes a lifetime impression must have been very rich and noble. There is reason to believe that some of the philosophers who devoted the whole of a long life to the development of a system based their entire work on one or two visions of this sort. They saw enough in a few moments to give them occupation for a generation. They said very little about the

vision, as such. They wrote about that which the vision implied. But there are signs in their works that they actually beheld the great glory,—signs which all who have beheld at once understand. They would have given forth the vision, too, had it been possible; they would have propounded an art of seership.

In all attempts to understand seership it is necessary to remember that there is this unwordable residuum which is worth all the rest. The exposition of this faith is imperfect and probably always will be imperfect. Only by constructively supplying what the seer omits can we expect to do justice to his statement. It is possible, however, that headway will be made in this reconstruction, so that the implications of the great insight will be more and more fully worked out.

Again, the vision comes in the form of glimpses of a higher mode of life, so far above this temporal existence that in comparison this is but the valley enclosed by the transcendental heights. On those heights life is said to be so glorious that all the marvellous pictures of heaven and of social Utopias are but dimly suggestive in comparison. There is music far more melodious than the music of earth, caught in part from transcendental melodies. Souls know souls and love souls. The things of our earth are laid bare. The thoughts of the ordinary mind are as plainly understood as

we now comprehend the limitations of childhood. Each man is known for what he is worth. There is no hiding behind prejudice, pride, self-conceit, and ignorance. There is justice, equality, freedom. Each man counts as one soul in proportion to the beauty, truth, and love he reveals. Souls are known by their "light," their radiance. The universe is beheld as one great kingdom of wisdom, beauty, light, brotherhood, love, sonship, and Fatherhood. It is reckoned by souls and the lives of souls, not by things and conditions. It is known as attainments, relations, joys, and beauties in eternity, not by moments or ages. Moments are there, conditions, and all else. But these are too trivial for special notice, and are not the decisive factors. The essential is *being*. Souls *are*. They are content to be, and to let other souls be. What life brings is their concern, not what they can make or unmake. They do what is given them to do, and therein find their joy. The glory of the whole, what is best, what is beautiful for the whole, is their ideal.

The chief value of the spiritual vision for our present purposes is to make record of it as one of the empirical approaches to faith in the divine order. It is an intuition, a point of view. For many it is doubtless the supreme evidence that there is a divine order. Yet the fact that it is thus important need not imply that the pantheistic

account of it which is sometimes given is true. It may seem to the percipient that he is, in very truth, the living God; while the world may for the moment appear to be a mere dream. Hence it is easy to understand how pantheism arose. Moreover, there are certain conclusions in regard to the intellect, the nature of matter, and the phenomenal world which seem to confirm the pantheistic notion. These conclusions we shall examine in other chapters. Suffice it at present that we not only reject all mysterious claims, but insist that the spiritual vision need not even be an accidental affair. Like all other experiences, the great insight is made known under certain conditions. To understand the conditions is to be able to cultivate them, and hence to acquire a type of self-consciousness which guards against the illusions of mysticism.

From any point of view it is necessary to understand the conditions of spiritual insight. There is no likelihood that close analysis will lead to scepticism. The experience is too real for that. The soul is actually, immediately in relation with a superior order of being. The reality of the vision in some profound sense is the prime fact. But the limitations of finite consciousness are also facts. These limitations do not necessarily exclude the higher consciousness. Yet they must always qualify any experience of which they are

the condition. In the first stages of mysticism the religious devotee is wholly ignorant of the conditions, hence the experience seems beyond all control. But in due course the act of turning to the higher region becomes a distinctly marked experience, largely subject to the will. Ordinarily, no doubt, the sublimest visions of the divine order, such as those which have been the basis of a philosophical lifetime, have come unexpectedly and unsought. Undoubtedly one should give these spontaneous experiences first rank throughout life. But as a lower type of consciousness invariably succeeds the vision, the question is, How shall one live on the lower plane? Is there any reason why one should not observe and practise the conditions of approach of the spiritual vision?

It is surely possible to enter into the fulness of the religious life and give an appreciative place to the profoundest facts of mysticism yet avoid the pitfalls, snares, and negations which usually mar spiritual philosophy. The test comes when the seer turns from the contemplative to the practical life, when he undertakes to describe his vision so that others may benefit by it. There are many problems to be considered before the adjustment is complete. But one need not look farther than the great works of a few seers of high rank to find a complete solution. The fact that there are problems is largely due to the speculative separation

between the divine order and the practical order. The divine *is* the practical order. God is here. The reality within and behind the seer's vision is the eternal order.

Since the divine order is the basis of all experience, as its tendencies include every moment of our life, we are only true to it when we take it fully into account, both in conduct and in thought. When we are at strife, in mental distress, we must find the calm spot amidst the storm, find the order within and behind the chaos. We should remember that there is no separation between the two. We may then assimilate the practical results in philosophical terms, and eliminate the vague mysticisms and irrational conclusions of spiritual thought. For no man was ever a pantheist in practical life. Practical life immediately gives the lie to a vast collection of airy idealisms. In the world of to-day we must meet the problems of to-day. Your life must show what you believe. If, therefore, you believe in the divine order, apply this belief in its fulness in such wise that not one thing in God's fair world shall be neglected.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRACTICAL IDEALISM OF PLATO

THERE are two leading points of view from which the great philosophers of the past may be regarded. We may consider their systems as pieces of exact reasoning, and, as such, more or less open to theoretical objections; or we may regard them in the light of their practical value, and their relation to the personal history of the men of genius who produced them. It is the latter point of view which is most apt to be overlooked. We forget that the great metaphysical systems grew out of concrete human experience. Oftentimes the experience was more profound than the attempted rationalisation of it. For language fails at many points. To understand what the philosopher really meant we must penetrate into the life of his time, note the conditions by which he was surrounded, and the type of civilisation which he rationalised or against which he reacted. Most of the philosophers were prophets, idealists. They not only lived more deeply in their age than most people, but were citizens of

an ideal commonwealth, whose standards their fellow-men had not yet attained. To know what they would have said if they could have told all, we must try to attain the vision of the ideal which they beheld. For the greatness of their thought consisted in part in its attempt to pass beyond itself. The vision, the first-hand experience, was more real than the faulty account of it which they were able to make.

All this is particularly true of Plato. The better one understands Greek life the more likely one is to appreciate the force of his idealism. We should remember that he lived in the culminating period of all that was highest in Greek life, most noble in its literature, and most beautiful in its art and architecture. We must therefore bear in mind all those excellencies for which we admire the Greeks. We must put ourselves back in imagination in the Athens of Pericles, the city of beauty, in an age of beauty. In addition we should note that Plato was a keen lover of all this beauty, one who deeply appreciated the arts, and one who, himself a "potential poet," as one scholar has called him, was an admirer of the great poets. Having all this clearly in mind, and remembering the types of government which prevailed in Sparta, Attica, and other states, we shall be able to appreciate in some measure the kind of idealism which could even find flaws in

all this remarkable development, and aspire beyond it to a still more noble beauty, too pure ever to be fully copied on this earth. For Plato objected to certain phases of the art and poetry of his day, not because he had no appreciation of poetry or art, but because he judged by a higher standard, at once appreciative and critical. His standard was the moral ideal, the goodness of perfect justice and of idealistic religion. Consequently he objected even to the best poetry and the sweetest music, unless it tended to elevate the soul. In his account of the ideal state the imitative arts are discarded, the poets are banished except so far as their verses are educationally fit for the young mind to hear, and kinds of music are ruled out which nearly every music-lover would put in a high rank.

The idealism of Plato must, then, be approached from its moral, its practical side. Philosophy was not, with the Greeks, the mere dialectical pursuit of ultimate truth; it was also the practice of virtue; one must be a philosopher in order to know what is real, what is worthy of the life of virtue. Many interests are therefore carried along, side by side, in Plato's dialogues. The dialogues may be read now as treatises on education, now as discussions of political virtue; again, as expositions of idealistic metaphysics, or as arguments for individual morality. One needs to read

such a dialogue as the *Republic* again and again with different interests in mind. After all these readings, one is never sure that one is expounding Plato, so easy is it to read one's own theories into his writings.

Emerson declared that every philosopher since these great Greek days has been either an Aristotelian or a Platonist. It is indeed extremely difficult to be original in any department of exact or idealistic thought which these men have not touched. Aristotle himself was a critic and interpreter of Plato. No thinker has ever been more influential. But the history of thought is full of Platonisms which Plato never held. Through Neo-Platonic sources historical Christianity has itself been the recipient of much of this Platonism. We are all more Platonic than we realise until we actually live with Plato's dialogues. Possibly it is no discredit if one's interpretation of Plato is only one aspect of his philosophy, the aspect which one is temperamentally best fitted to understand; for if the interpretation be but a fragment it may nevertheless be thus far true, and hence suggest the universality of the doctrine which inspired it. Even Neo-Platonism is in Plato, that is, much of it is in one of the most mythical dialogues, from which it was chiefly developed; and some of the most negative criticisms made by Aristotle

are already implied in one of the more analytical dialogues.

So much, then, by way of preparation for the particular point of view of this chapter. We turn now to the philosophical tendencies which in part gave shape to Plato's idealism. The Greeks of old looked out upon the face of things as we look forth now, and noted the ever-changing character of the life about them. Hence they sought for a principle of explanation of this unceasing change. Heracleitus declared that there is nothing abiding, nothing permanent except the law of change. No one can step into the same river twice, for the same river is not there. Everything is in flux, ever on and on; everything is Becoming. On the other hand, the Eleatic philosophers arrived at the opposite conclusion, namely, that only Being is, —there is no change, no Becoming; non-being is not. Another group of philosophers, the Pythagoreans, found the ultimate reality of things in number. At length the Sophists came forward with their purely practical teachings. The greatest of these teachers could find no profounder statement to make, so tradition runs, than to declare that "man is the measure of all things." That is, man's thought at the moment is the only standard of truth and reality: knowledge is perception. That is right and true which seems so to you when you perceive it; or, it is right because it

is according to custom. Finally, came Socrates with his high ethical ideals, his theory that knowledge is virtue, his belief in intuition and the soul, and his searching method of dialectical investigation. All this finds its place in Plato, who has both a theory of Being and of Becoming, of the passing perceptions of man and the truer reason of conceptual thinking, as well as a place for the moral ideal of Socrates. That which concerns us here is to note the central principles by which the unification of all these philosophical elements was attained.

Generally speaking, there are two realms in Plato's universe, the world of appearances, of constant flux, Becoming, or change, and the world of pure, changeless Being. The first corresponds to the ever-flowing world of Heracleitus and, considered by itself, it possesses no true being. The second, regarded by itself, eternally *is*,—it is not subject to Becoming, or change. Thus the two realms are sharply contrasted, and it is easy to quote passages which suggest that they are so far separate as to possess no connection. But this would be to take a fragmentary view of Plato's philosophy. In reality, the two realms are closely united, since the domain of Ideas is the ground or cause of the realm of appearances, and since the world of multiplicity exists for the sake of the Ideas, that is, for the good. God is profoundly good and

wishes to share His goodness with all beings, wishes to create for the sake of the good—as we learn from the *Timæus*. Goodness is, in fact, the ideal end for which all things exist: the whole vast universe is organised for the benefit of its beauty, its truth, and perfection. However subordinate the visible world may be, it can only be understood with reference to the organising principles and causes which exist for the good. The visible world is not, therefore, in any sense the product of chance, but is the "imitation" of intelligence, is a marvellously adapted and well-ordered sphere in which there is a harmonious gradation from the self-sufficient good down to the purposive functions of matter in its crudest forms. All is nicely proportioned, adjusted. Everywhere symmetry and beauty have been as fully attained as the nature of the thing permitted. The physical world is only to be classed as "appearance," and hence declared unintelligible, when we regard it *solely by itself*. To discover the intelligible principle we must look beyond the visible to see why and how it came to be. Then we learn that for every group, kind, species of thing, in this richly complex world, there is an Idea or eternal "pattern" which gives it significance and organises it in relation to all other things. The universe as a whole is the "only-begotten," the image of the intelligible, the perfect, and the good. It is

as fair and perfect, as abounding in beauty, as it could be and still be a visible world. For, obviously, the first place is accorded to the unchangeable, wholly beautiful, and perfect order of being which is not subject to the vicissitudes of the world of natural generation.

Moreover, the soul of man is a denizen of both regions, and hence, for one who understands the principle of union, who knows what is real, there is no gulf between the two worlds. Through reason and insight the soul knows the superior order, as we shall presently see. Through sensation and opinion, the common experiences of life, it is made acquainted with the world of change. It is possible for us to be so immersed in the life of sensation and opinion that we know not who we are or why we exist. But it is also possible to understand the purpose of life and the universal principle of organisation so that, by imitating the order and beauty of the universe, we shall become harmoniously adjusted in our lives and appreciate the reason of things which unites us with the good.

With these preliminary considerations in mind, let us enter for a moment into the realm of pure Being, the world of the moral law, the soul, and the perfect Ideas. This is the realm of the self-existent, the ends or purposes of things; whereas everything in the lower realm exists for the sake of something else. God, or the good, is ever first, as

the supreme condition, the symmetry and beauty without which even the Ideas could not be. But the Ideas are the immediate objects of interest, since they give variety to the divine order, they are the archetypes or ideal ends of the multiplicity of things in each group. Each is one, indivisible, immutable, real, apart from any or all of its embodiments. Taken together, the Ideas constitute the perfect, divine order or ultimate constitution, far above the fluctuations of the sense-world, incapable of growth or decay. The Ideas are not themselves dependent on anything here below, but the value of that which changes consists in its reference to the unchangeable.

Since the Ideas are above the world of natural generation, of opinion, and sense perception, our ordinary modes of thinking are incapable of apprehending these pure realities. Hence the Ideas are known to men only by intuition, or by that dialectical process which truly discovers the intelligible principle of the world. But the soul, although imprisoned in the body, and compelled to participate in the world of change, nevertheless belongs far more intimately to this heavenly order. Long ago the soul beheld by pure insight these perfect archetypes of beauty, truth, and the good. The spiritual eye of the soul enables it to see with unclouded vision; and what is once beheld in all its purity is never wholly forgotten.

Meeting with imperfect copies of these Ideas in the world of sense, the soul recollects the perfect originals in heaven. Thus memory gives a direct clue to the supreme principles of thought or reason whereby the true theory of knowledge is discovered. True knowledge is possible just because there is Being which abides,[1] a principle of ultimate organisation.

The things which you and I perceive in this world of change and appearances are imitations, aspirations after these heavenly Ideas. For example, take the conception of the beautiful. According to Plato, there is an absolute Idea of the beautiful, a unity, immutable in the divine order. The many beautiful but changeable objects which you and I see are imperfect resemblances of that absolute beauty. Likewise, there is a permanent, absolute justice, greatness, and the like. Perfect justice is the standard which all men seek to attain. The reason for our moral struggles, the purpose of our mundane existence, the meaning of all that is obscure is seen in so far as we apprehend the divine archetypes. For the Ideas are at once the meaning and the essence of things, their real nature.

Highest of all the Ideas is the good, which Plato tells us can only be seen with difficulty. The good is described as the author of knowledge in all

[1] See the *Cratylus*, p. 440.

things known, the source of all that is most useful, "parent of light," source of truth and reason. The good is the supreme essence, more beautiful than even beauty itself, the single Idea of the many good things, universal author of all things beautiful and right. Only when we know the goodness of things do we truly know them; and when we know the essence we learn that all is fair and sound and true. God, parent of all good things, is just, good, and true, not the creator of that which is evil; and He should be always be represented in this pure light.[1]

The Ideas should not then be thought of as separate or ultimately independent, but as constituting the divine order, the central principle of which is the good. In that divine world harmony and beauty everywhere reign. There is no time there, for time consists of parts, while eternity is one and unbroken; it is the nature of intelligible being to be eternal.[2] There is naught to break in and interfere, for there is no other reality. No progress is possible since the Ideas are eternally perfect and their organisation complete. Only in the world of generation is there struggle to attain, and even there the development is toward the fixed types of pure, changeless Being. Whenever we think truly of this mundane sphere we judge it not by its flux or change, but by its

[1] *Republic*, Bk. ii., 380. [2] *Timæus*, p. 38.

purposive aspiration toward the divine order. Whenever we truly seek justice, for example, or court wisdom and the other virtues, we pattern our life after the absolute ideals, not after the relative standards of men. The lower domain is for ever unintelligible by itself.

Thus, wide apart as are the two worlds, there is ever a close connection, the character of which we understand in so far as we truly know the soul and lead the life of the idealist.

So much by way of brief suggestion of the fundamental principles of Plato's idealism. The clue to the practical idealism is found in this same conception of order, already suggested in part. In the *Gorgias* we read that "communion and friendship and orderliness and temperance and justice bind together heaven and earth and gods and men, and that this universe is therefore called Cosmos or order, not disorder or misrule." [1] This is part of a long argument for virtue in which the word "order" frequently appears. We are told, for example, that every man should be his own ruler, temperate, master of his desires and passions.[2] Orderliness is a basis for happiness; hence man must know the relative value of pleasures and pains, must make life an art, the aim of which shall be the good. Therefore the good man is he who says and does that which is virtuous

[1] *Gorgias*, p. 508, Jowett's translation. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 495.

with reference to a standard.[1] He does not act at random, but has method, system in everything, like the artist. "The artist disposes all things in order, and compels the one part to harmonise and accord with the other part, until he has constructed a regular and systematic whole." Thus the good soul is orderly, harmonious. Nothing proceeds by chance, but there is beauty, art, system throughout life, because there is wisdom, temperance, justice within. These terms are practically interchangeable with Plato. Truth is essential to virtue, that is, knowledge of what is enduring, worth while. Yet art, beauty, is also essential. The good is "the proper order inhering in each thing"; but the good is also the wise, the just. He who truly desires to be happy must practise temperance, but this is impossible without the other virtues which together constitute the good life.

Thus, as the true artist endeavours to do "well and perfectly whatever he does," so the man of justice and wisdom seeks to round out his life, to be at once holy and a useful citizen, well-balanced in his private life, and orderly in all his social activities. And then Plato rises to the great thought of the universe as an order, Cosmos, in the passage I have already quoted. We thus see in what sense the Idea of the good rules over all things, how the conception of order is at once

[1] *Gorgias*, p. 503.

practical and philosophical, a principle of art and of morals.

The conception of order appears here and there all through the dialogues. The unity of virtue is the great idea of the *Protagoras*, in which the optimistic statement is made that "the only real ill-doing is the deprivation of knowledge. . . ." For "no wise man will allow . . . that any human being errs voluntarily, or voluntarily does evil and dishonourable actions."[1] "To prefer evil to good is not in human nature," we are told.[2] Hence the true cause of lack of self-control, with all the disorderliness that follows, is *ignorance;* and the real remedy is that wisdom which at once implies courage, justice, and the other virtues whose unity is in the divine order. As there is order, balance, in the universe at large, so there is need of balance and rhythm in the life of man.

The conception of virtue as order, and of orderliness among the virtues, is one of the strongest ideas in Plato's system. As the universe is manifold, rich, beautiful, and has many ideal ends, no one of which suffices by itself, so moral ideals are many, and none is adequate alone. Man as a moral being is multiform. He should not seek one virtue alone,—for example, courage without wisdom. Any given virtue implies all the others, and Plato constantly defines the virtues in terms

[1] *Protagoras*, p. 345. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 358.

of one another. Yet one must pursue each end as of special worth, and in all this pursuit avoid excess, seek beauty, remember to maintain order, balance, adjustment.

The spirit of Plato, the artist, speaks most persuasively on this theme. It is related of him that as a youth he was noted for his temperance, his moderation. But we also feel the spirit of Plato the unflinching moralist, and there is a depth of moral earnestness in dialogues like the *Protagoras* and *Gorgias* which inspires keen enthusiasm for the right.

In the *Meno*, Plato assures us that "all nature is akin." In the *Sophist*, we read that all things are "the work of divine art," products of the "divine reason and knowledge." Also in the *Timæus*, one of the most mythical of the dialogues, the account of creation makes the same principle clear. God, as creator, has done His work perfectly, He has brought forth all things in order, in harmony, and due proportion.

But the conception of order is most fully worked out in the *Republic*. It is customary to think of this great dialogue as a theory of the ideal state, and therefore to estimate, perhaps condemn it, because its theory of the state does not coincide with one's own. But the inquiry into the nature of justice in the state is simply the main thread of interest; virtue is studied first in the state because

it can best be regarded at large before it is seen in the individual. The *Republic* as a whole is also an inquiry into the nature of reality, and the place and power of virtue in the divine order. It is the good, as we have seen, which stands at the summit of the unity of virtue, and the good is to be understood in relation to Plato's entire idealism. Thus we shall fail to see the scope of Plato's ethics if we limit the theory of justice to a certain type of the state. Justice as used by Plato is a broad term, and means what is right, what is ethical, in a very large sense. For example, it is spoken of in the *Republic* as the "proper human virtue," the "greatest good," "the excellence of the soul," as the wise, the beautiful, and the like. It is connected with friendship, and with harmony. It is the ultimate cause and condition of (the existence of) virtue, includes individuality, respects property, relates to the natural order and government in the soul, the retributions and readjustments of the future life, and it crowns the virtues. It is based on knowledge of the real, the true, the eternal, hence is connected with the ultimate order, the real system of things. Consequently, a man must be a philosopher in the profoundest sense of the word in order to know and practise justice. It is no wonder that Plato chose the philosopher as the guardian of his ideal state; for only one whose thought and life were the incarna-

tion of justice, as thus broadly defined, would in any sense be worthy. Thus it is that when we approach the subject from the individual point of view we begin to see the full bearing of this ethical idealism.

He whose mind is fixed upon true being [says Plato],[1] has no time to look down upon the affairs of men, or to be filled with jealousy and enmity in the struggle against them; his eye is ever fixed and directed towards fixed and immutable principles, which he sees neither injuring nor injured by another, but all in order, moving according to reason; these he imitates, and to these he would, as far as he can, conform himself. Can a man help imitating that with which he holds reverential converse? . . . And the philosopher also, conversing with the divine and immutable, becomes a part of that divine and immutable order, as far as nature allows.

It is the man, then, who apprehends the divine order, and whose own life is orderly, who exemplifies Plato's ideal. We have already noted the connection between the conception of order and the unity of virtue. The ideal man of the *Republic* is one who is individual, who does some one thing well, who, above all, is "at unity with himself." Such a man is well-proportioned, harmonious, graceful, governed by reason, at peace

[1] *Republic*, Bk. vi., 500.

within; he is *one* man, not many; he has attained a "friendly harmony" among the virtues, his life is exemplified by "the beauty of reason." Balance among the virtues, that is, temperance, is thus the basis of a sound social life. There must be self-control, order at the centre; then the whole life will be full of rhythm and harmony. Thus we are told that "good language and harmony and grace and rhythm depend on simplicity . . . the simplicity of a truly and nobly ordered mind." [1]

There are many suggestions to show how this adjustment may be attained. Plato divides the psychical principle in man into three parts. The highest of these is reason which, in the well-ordered life, rules the two lower principles, yet is aided by them, when they are "not corrupted by education." Again, Plato describes the nature of man as consisting of a lower and a higher activity, more or less in conflict until understood and brought into order. Love appears as the ally of order: "True love is a love of beauty and order—temperate and harmonious." In the *Phædrus* and *Symposium*, this philosophy of love is developed more at length. Every one has heard of "Platonic love," but not every one has heard of love as Plato actually wrote about it. In the *Phædrus*, Plato describes, in the form of a myth, the contest

[1] *Republic*, Bk. iii., 401.

between the soul (which comes down from heaven pure, with reminiscences of the beautiful) and the lower and higher natures, which are compared to two chariot horses. There is both a sensuous love and a higher love, and the contest is often fierce between them. But the soul that has been borne down and has suffered is thereby informed, is better off than the one that has not met life in all these phases. Great blessings come to the lover, "heavenly blessings"; it is not all strife and passion, not all "madness."

In the *Symposium*, the need of discriminating between the lower and higher loves is also pointed out. "The love of the noble mind, which is in union with the unchangeable, is everlasting." [1] The ideal is to unite the two loves into one harmony, which is "an agreement, a symphony of opposites." True love, then, is "harmonious in all its actions"; it is "concerned with the good, and . . . is perfected in company with temperance and justice." "Love set in order the empire of the gods—the love of beauty." "From the love of the beautiful has sprung every good in heaven and earth." Thus true love is intimately associated with the wise, the beautiful, and the good; and in the profoundest sense "There is nothing which men love but the good." "Love is only birth in beauty, whether of body or soul." [2]

[1] *Symposium*, p. 184. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 206.

True love, therefore, conceives and brings forth children in beauty. Whether these are children in the flesh, or thoughts of love, they should be produced in beauty. "He who would proceed rightly in this matter should begin in youth to turn to beautiful forms . . . out of which he should create fair thoughts." And then comes the climax: he who has been rightly instructed in regard to love, who beholds the "beautiful in due order and succession," at last has a vision of a single science, "which is the science of beauty everywhere." [1]

Love, then, is one of the many qualities in man's life which are to be "set in order." Life is a science, it is an art, and we must possess that wisdom which reveals the fitting proportions of things. Moderation, balance, rhythm, harmony, are words which Plato so often uses that we must repeat them frequently and remember that temperance is essential to all the goods of the soul. "The temperate man is the friend of God, for he is like Him." [2] Yet Plato has to admit that "the whole multitude of men lack temperance in their lives, either from ignorance or from want of self-control, or both." [3] The word "temperance" in Plato means so much that Jowett, his great translator, tells us that we should understand by it not only temperance, as we use the word, but

[1] *Symposium*, p. 210. [2] *Laws*, iv., 716. [3] *Ibid.*, v., 734.

also, in different connections, moderation, modesty, discretion, and wisdom. In one of his shorter dialogues, the *Charmides*, Plato gives a description of a beautiful youth who is the embodiment of temperance, although his virtue is not yet self-conscious. "Excessive pains and pleasures are justly to be regarded as the greatest diseases of the soul." [1]

It is the soul which is the governing principle, and which is to attain this poise, this balance, between tendencies, virtues, pleasures, and pains. Remember that the soul is not only immersed in the flesh, but contemplates the supersensible Ideas by clear intuition. The thought of the soul is

> best when the mind is gathered into herself and none of these things trouble her—neither sounds nor sights, nor pain nor any pleasure—when she has as little as possible to do with the body, and has no bodily sense or feeling, but is aspiring after being.[2] . . . Returning into herself she reflects; then she passes into the realm of purity, and eternity, and immortality, and unchangeableness, which are her kindred, and with them she ever lives, when she is by herself and is not let or hindered; then she ceases from her erring ways, and, being in communion with the unchanging, is unchanging. And this state of the soul is called wisdom. . . . The soul is in the very likeness of the divine, and immortal and intelligible. [3]

[1] *Timæus*, p. 87. [2] *Phædo*, p. 66. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 79, 80.

The soul uses the body as its instrument of perception, and it possesses a divine ruling principle over the body, in opposition to the bodily desires. It was made prior to the body to be its "ruler and mistress." [1] But no soul-life is "Platonic" which is one-sided. In many beautiful passages Plato points out the need of balance, order, between soul and body. The soul should be surrounded by beautiful objects that its life may become beautiful. There should be gymnastic for the body to give strength to this balance, and music for the mind to aid in the attainment of rhythm. It is thus the rhythmical and harmonious nature, in body, mind, and soul, that is characterised by temperance. Both soul and body are needed. Plato warns us that we should

not move the body without the soul or the soul without the body, and thus they will aid one another, and be healthy and well-balanced.[2] . . . And when a beautiful soul harmonises with a beautiful form, and the two are cast in one mould, that will be the fairest of sights to him who has the eye to contemplate the vision.[3] . . . Not that the good body improves the soul, but that the good soul improves the body.

If any one finds it difficult to attain the balance of which Plato speaks, he is reminded of the power of an ideal occupation:

[1] *Timæus*, p. 34. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 89. [3] *Republic*, iii., 403.

He whose desires are strong in one direction will have them weaker in others; they will be like a stream which has been drawn off into another channel. . . . He whose desires are drawn toward knowledge in every form will be absorbed in the pleasures of the soul, and will hardly feel bodily pleasure—if he be a true philosopher and not a sham one.[1]

It is thus the life in the ideal direction which solves the problems of our unregeneracy.

"There should be no secret corner of meanness; for meanness is entirely opposed to a soul that is always longing after the whole of things both divine and human." Plato goes so far as to say that he who is harmoniously constituted will not be unjust or hard in his dealings. Truth itself is akin to this proportion of things. Besides other qualities in our philosophical life, we should therefore seek for a "well-proportioned and gracious mind whose own nature will of herself be drawn to the true being of everything."

Plato's theory of education is so well known that it requires only a brief mention to show that it is an application of the same practical idealism which we are here considering. Plato reminds his readers of those mistaken theorists who think they can put a knowledge into the soul which was not there before, like giving eyes to the blind. It is a

[1] *Republic*, vi., 486.

question of giving the soul's powers the right direction. True education is, first, of the inner being, it makes for virtue, and greatly tends to humanise men in their social relations. Education is indeed "the one great thing," and the direction in which it "starts a man will determine his future life." It should begin in the nursery and continue throughout life; yes, it should begin even before birth, and with the plays of children. "The spirit of law must be imparted to them in music, and the spirit of order, instead of disorder, will attend them in all their actions, and make them grow." [1] The youth should begin to be an artisan, a carpenter, or warrior even in his play, and thus be taught from the first to fill a place in the state. Plato defines education in his maturest work, the *Laws*, as "that training which is given by suitable habits to the first instincts of virtue in children." [2] It is the "constraining and directing of youth towards that right reason, which the law affirms, and which the experience of the best of our elders has agreed to be truly right." [3] Example is one of the great powers in education, and it is a cardinal principle that the elders should never be seen doing that which the young ought not to imitate. "The best way of training the young is to train yourself at the same time." [4]

[1] *Republic*, iv., 42.
[2] *Laws*, ii., 653.
[3] *Ibid.*, ii., 660.
[4] *Ibid.*, v., 730.

The virtuous legislator will therefore exhort parents to train themselves that they may rightly influence their children. Reverence for children is thus as important in its way as respect for parents, for the aged, and for the laws and religious customs of the state. Again, the legislator should see to it that numerical order is preserved in the education of youth. It is important for educators to consider the after-benefits of this and other studies, not only in domestic economy, but in art and politics. Music, and dancing, and literature should be of that high order calculated to further the growth of virtue. But Plato emphatically says that "the sum of education is right training in the nursery." [1] It is "the first and fairest thing that the best of men can ever have, and which, though liable to take a wrong direction, is capable of reformation. And this work of reformation is the great business of every man while he lives."

There are plans and methods to be applied in Plato's ideal state which we should dismiss as impractical, if we judged by human life as it actually exists. Plato proposed to regulate by law much that we should regard as pertaining to the private life. He was overfond of numerical division, and planned his state on an exact basis, with a precise number of citizens, the number

[1] *Laws*, i., p. 644.

always to be maintained. But the important consideration is the principle which governed his discussions throughout. I once heard Plato sweepingly condemned on account of his plan for community of wives and children. Consider for a moment how shallow this criticism is. As I have before said, Plato's inquiry into the ideal state is undertaken by way of discovering what justice is, what virtue is. The highest possible virtue is his ideal. Hence he proposed in the *Republic* a plan for the better development of virtuous servants of the state as a remedy for unfortunate conditions. The communism was to be among certain classes only, and was only a step beyond social conditions which existed in Plato's time. But Plato evidently concluded that this plan was impractical. He therefore discarded it in his later work, the *Laws*. But the *Laws*, his longest dialogue, is seldom read, and so his later theory is not well known. But even if he had retained his plan, it would have a very subordinate place. The great merit of Plato is that he did not "descend to meet." He did not begin by asking, What are the social conditions to-day? and, What sort of state is possible? That which exists round about us is the realm of appearances: only in the invisible world is that which is truly real and enduring. It would be a base surrender of the ideal to begin by asking what is possible. The ideal state which

Plato discusses exists confessedly "in idea only," for there is no such state on earth.

> In heaven . . . there is laid up a pattern of such a city and he who desires may behold this, and beholding, govern himself accordingly. But whether there really is or ever will be such an one is of no importance to him: for he will act according to the laws of that city and of no other.[1]

The ideal state is the moral republic of God. Any one who is able to distinguish Being from Becoming, to live for the realities of things instead of for the appearances, and, above all, he who lives righteously, is already a member of that state. It is too pure an ideal ever to be fully realised on this earth, but the important thing is to approximate it, to copy the perfect as well as we can. Hence Plato is extremely practical precisely because he refuses to capitulate to the demands of what is eulogistically called "practical" by those whose eyes are blinded to the eternal. Plato is consistent throughout in holding to the ideal as something to be pursued. The ideal is above and beyond. It is in striving to approximate it that our lives have worth. Without the ideal, life is mere appearance, valueless. Inspired by the ideal, we may really lift our lives towards the true, the beautiful, and the good; we may really become

[1] *Republic*, ix., 595.

"at one with" ourselves, orderly, just, sane, rational. Unless we understand Plato from this point of view we shall miss his larger meaning. He has been discarded by some because he sundered his two worlds, because he put the divine order, the realm of the Ideas, in heaven, far from the world of change here below. But the two are not sundered if you see the place and function of the Ideas. Yonder rose in its beauty is one of the many beautiful things whose existence is made significant by aspiring, as it were, after "absolute beauty." The conduct of the righteous man is yet nearer the divine order, for it is rendered noble by sharing in the good. Our rational nature is likewise a sharing in the divine. "Reason," Plato says, "is beautiful and gentle." How different from the condemnation with which reason is sometimes dismissed nowadays! To press through to the reason of things is to behold their true reality, whereas opinion leaves us in the realm of "generation," appearances. Reason is order, the divine beauty. Reason is also the system of the virtues, their unity. Hence, as we have seen, man must possess that wisdom which enables him to distinguish the desirable from the undesirable, to avoid excess, attain balance, rhythm, and harmony; and that wisdom is the prime essential of the life of reason.

The importance of this rational interpretation of

the world is made clear in the *Philebus*, one of the most profound of the dialogues. The discussion is in large part an inquiry into the relative merits of pleasure and wisdom regarded as candidates for the highest good. The good is defined as the perfect, the sufficient. But neither wisdom nor pleasure proves to be adequate alone. Pleasure is of many kinds, varying from the vehement, distracting pleasures to the pure delights of the life of thought. In itself, pleasure contains no principle of organisation. It is necessary, then, to discriminate its kinds, select the kinds which are capable of organisation as aids to the good, and assign each to its proper place. This is the work of reason and demands insight into the total organisation of things. First in order in the universal system stands symmetry, beauty, measure, of whose existence as the foundation principle of things we everywhere have evidence in the universe, which is "not left to the guidance of an irrational and random chance," but is "ordered and governed by a marvellous intelligence and wisdom." [1] That is, "mind orders all things": there is "a mighty infinite and an adequate limit . . . which orders and arranges years and seasons and months." Next to this ultimate measure of all things comes the measured, that is, the perfect Ideas or archetypes. Then follow mind

[1] *Philebus*, p. 28.

and wisdom—as you and I ordinarily know them —next, the pure arts and sciences, and, in the fifth place, the pure and true pleasures. Pleasure, considered by itself, belongs to the world of natural generation, that is, it is a "process"; while true Being is unchangeable, has no natural generation. The utmost that can be said of a "process" is that it exists for the sake of some essence or good. The essence is an Idea, absolute and eternal. Thus the place of pleasure is not understood till it be regarded from above in the light of the essences to which it is contributory. These essences, we have seen, are second in rank to the organising beauty, which measures and adjusts all things in relation to the good.

To find the place of pleasure in practical life a man must, then, attain that orderly adjustment which we have been considering all along,—the state where pleasure is not permitted to run to excess, where there is stability, moderation. In short, man's experiences must be organised according to the principle of rationality or intelligence exemplified in the universe at large. But Plato assures us that it is not sufficient to possess knowledge of that which is within the "divine circle," we must also know the "human sphere and circle." [1] The realms of the divine and the human, the Ideas and natural generation, are not so

[1] *Philebus*, p. 63.

far apart in this dialogue. Indeed, to understand the principle of organisation of the divine order is to see that the same law holds in the lowest level of life, in so far as that life may be brought into relation with the good. In deepest truth the domain of the good is not far from every one of us, for Plato says without qualification that "all percipient beings desire and hunt after good, and are eager to catch and have the good about them, and care not for the attainment of anything of which good is not a part." [1] That is, all men are stirred by desire, and what they really desire is the good. Enlighten them to the full and they will consciously and eagerly pursue the good.

"Ignorance is the greatest of diseases," Plato assures us. Each of us has in his bosom two counsellors. The essential is to know that when the soul is turned down into the lower nature, into the shows of things, it is deceived, imprisoned. There is no unity there and never can be. The visible world is the region of multiplicity. But that which is real is *one*. Plato therefore searches for the reality of whatever he considers. Beneath pages and pages of what many would call dry reading, word-playing, and the drawing of hair-splitting distinctions this is the great interest. When some one comes forward with a theory, Socrates, who is usually the chief speaker,

[1] *Philebus*, p. 21.

immediately asks him what he means by his general statements. The Sophist who is going about persuading people of whatever they wish to believe is taken to task for not first considering what is right, what people *ought* to be persuaded to believe and do. Fallacy after fallacy is exposed, error is run to earth, and the Sophists are repeatedly refuted. Oftentimes the conclusion is left in fragmentary shape, but it is there. Thus all the arts and sciences of the philosopher's day are analysed, knowledge is investigated, piety, rhetoric, the fine arts, poetry, friendship, and the like. In each case, it is the universal that is important, not the differences. Virtue is a whole, poetry is a whole, art is a whole. The art of painting, for example, is a whole, and he who really understands the whole knows the parts. He who would be master of an art "must know the real nature of everything."[1] It is the reality, not the imitation, that is desirable; the reality, not the appearance of virtue. The search for realities immediately takes us into the invisible order, where we begin to behold things as wholes from the point of view of eternity. Most men are dreamers; they put the resemblance in place of the real object. But we must know both the Idea and its objects, and never confuse them.

He who truly understands will therefore make

[1] *Phædrus*, p. 263.

only that distinction between the worlds which is required by reason and the purity of the Ideas. He who sees the divinity of reason in things will be able to bring unity into his entire life. For Plato makes no separation between the secular and the religious life. The worship and pursuit of the Ideas is religion, the spiritual life. But it is also the true social life, the life of politics. For politics did not mean with Plato what it means in New York. It was one phase of the life of virtue. To pursue justice or virtue in the state was something sacred. Justice is the very foundation, "the health" of the true state. Right education "makes a man eagerly pursue the ideal perfection of citizenship." [1] There are no ideals too high to be striven after. The true follower of Plato will often breathe the prayer which is put into the mouth of Socrates, at the end of the *Phædrus:*

> Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul; and may the outward and inward man be at one. May I reckon the wise to be the wealthy, and may I have such a quantity of gold as none but the temperate can carry.

The great value of Plato for us who live in a distant world, and believe in evolution, is *the power of the ideal* as a clue to the divine order.

[1] *Laws*, i., 644.

His idealism is as practical to-day as in the great Greek days of old. For it is founded on a principle that is eternally true, however much the account of it may be mingled with outgrown conceptions. Plato's organising principle is still the soundest theory of its type that has been proposed. Both in conception and in method of exposition his theory of the divine order is the most valuable aid. His dialogues also put the mind into the right mood for productive yet critical investigation.

Plato believed in the essential goodness of man, and the beauty of the universe. He is a thorough-going optimist of a keenly rational type. The constitution of things is, for him, entirely sound and sweet. There is no evil power. Clothed in their right minds, all men really love the good. They do wrong through folly, intemperance, ignorance. No man would either voluntarily choose the greater of two evils, or chose evil at all, if he saw what he was doing. Evil is solely attributable to the ignorantly directed activities of man, asleep in the darkness of the world of sense. Let a man hold his head up and behold the sun, and he shall find that all things are fair. All things are more or less imperfect copies of the beautiful. Man is by nature a moral being; the universe is moral. The entire rational organisation of things is for the sake of the moral ideal.

Modern philosophers would tell us that Plato

overlooks many of the conditions of virtue; that he passes lightly by the dark spots on the world. But one might reply that modern thinkers are apt to forget the ideal meaning of life's conflicts. The important thing is not the darkness, but the light, the discovery that the darkness is darkness—that is one of the great messages of Plato. There is a moral law, we are souls, and there is an eternal order to which we belong. Let each begin to live as a loyal citizen of the eternal republic, and the other things will take care of themselves. The lower order of life simply cannot be understood by itself. You must see the eternal to know the temporal. Therefore turn your vision towards those perfect Ideas whose collective being constitutes the divine order.

There need be nothing far off and metaphysical in this mode of life. Put into terms of plain speech the Ideas are ideals. Only we must remember that for Plato the Ideas are not brought forth by reflection on our sense experience, they are not psychological ideas. If, then, you would make a concrete application, do not think of your friend as his physical appearance leads you to picture him. Do not think of his ideal as mere prudence, the best he can attain in this life. But regard your friend as a *soul*, a word which means more for Plato than for any one who has ever used it. The ideal of your friend is that which

would give his life the divinest significance as a citizen of the republic of God. It is a "heavenly pattern," a unity of goodness and beauty, combined in unique fashion, that is, fit to do its own particular work as well as it can be done. A product of the divine art, it must itself be an artist, poised, balanced, harmonious, rhythmical, orderly. Thus shall the soul be worthy of a place among the Ideas. Truly, Plato's *Republic* would be realised, if we could regard all men from the standpoint of the ideal.

CHAPTER IX

PLOTINUS AND SPINOZA

THE usual tendency of those who claim to have enjoyed the beatific vision is to clothe their thought in negatively mystical language. Nothing is more distasteful to the rationalist than any form of mysticism. Hence the supposed seer is scorned, ridiculed, if not classed as a fanatic. Because the seer is unable to account for his vision except in negative terms it is assumed by the rationalist that the mystic's supernal world is an absolute blank and therefore unworthy of investigation. The treatment accorded the mystic is more negative than the mystic's own account of his beatitude. It is easy to say that the fault lies wholly with the rationalist, who seems to be hopelessly perverse, and thereby shows that he is entirely unillumined. Obviously, the spiritual vision is primarily an affair of experience. The reality for which the mystic pleads is immediate, the description is necessarily derived and secondary. If you have ascended the heights, you know what it is to have the vision, and if another

scorns you it is clear that he has not dwelt on high. Yet, to turn down the rationalist in this superior fashion is as absurd as for the rationalist to despise the mystic. There is another way of looking at mysticism. Perhaps half the fault lies with the mystic, after all. Let us examine an historical instance to see what we may learn, namely, the Neo-Platonism of Plotinus.

In order to appreciate the character of this mystical system it is well to remember that the age of Plato and Aristotle was in many respects the most remarkable intellectual age the world has ever seen. Yet, as scepticism usually, for a time, succeeds belief, so, despite the profound conclusions of Plato and his great pupil, when the masters were gone their followers lost sight of many of their soundest rational results. Hence, the period to which we turn to study the rise of mysticism was in many respects an age of doubt and restless search. The religious period which culminated in the system of Plotinus (born 204 A.D., at Lycopolis, in Egypt) was an age when satisfaction was sought beyond the human, beyond reason, above all finite knowledge. It was a time of strong belief in renunciation and asceticism, a period of longing for salvation through union with the divine, a search for supernatural revelation, a higher authority. One of the immediate causes of this longing was a sense of dis-

satisfaction with the dualism between spirit and matter bequeathed by the philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, whose rationalism seemed to the prophets of this religious period to be inadequate. The pathway of reason apparently closed, there was an ardent desire to discover a state of inner independence of the world, to find the higher unity which the world of sensation and discursive reasoning failed to disclose.

We need not here concern ourselves with the various synthetic attempts to solve this problem,[1] nor consider to what extent the Alexandrian mystics may have been influenced by traditions which came from Oriental sources. Suffice it that the usual pathway of philosophy was deserted, and that gradually a doctrine was developed which gave classic expression to mysticism. We are admitted into the heart of that doctrine when we read the description of what Plotinus called τὸ πρῶτον (the First), that is, the supreme reality. How that Being is discovered we shall presently consider. Let us first note how it is defined.

Although the First is said to be self-included unity, self-sufficient, the creator and source of everything, yet the moment the attempt is made to conceive it in terms of attributes the audacious

[1] For an account of this whole period see Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, Part II., chap. ii. See also Inge's *Christian Mysticism*, chaps. iii., iv.

thinker is informed that the First is beyond all conception and beyond all attributes; infinite because incomprehensible, unique, before all kinds, impersonal, unchangeable, absolutely transcendent, separated from the finite, without corporeal properties, even above mind. In short, the First is not properly an object of knowledge at all, but is unspeakable. The First is therefore only definable by what it is not. It is not substance, not quality, not reason, not soul, not in motion, not in place, not in time, absolutely simple, inexpressible. One can only describe the First by repeating what the ancient Hindoo sages said to those who sought to define Brahman, "Not this, not this," whenever any thing or quality was mentioned which purported to be that "One, without a second."

There is, to be sure, a long chain of existences extending down to the lowest physical forms, for the Neo-Platonic system is extremely elaborate, and finds room for nearly every doctrine that preceded it in Greek philosophy. It is essential to our purpose briefly to consider this descending series, in order to understand the great problem which beset the mystic in his pursuit of the First.

In general the world, as Neo-Platonism conceives it, is a process of outgoing from Deity and a return to Deity. But the problem is to understand the first and last steps. It is usual to apply

the term "emanation" to this type of world-production, but this word is misleading unless carefully explained.[1] Creation is not due to design on the part of the First; it does not result from an act of will, but is a sort of overflow or by-product, which adds nothing to the First and takes nothing from it. Plurality, changeability, and the rest, belong only to the creative products, not to the First. Creation is a kind of universal necessity of the fulness of being, and results simply because it is possible. In a sense, also, it is a "fall," as we shall presently see.

The first product of this ultimate One is νοῦς (Thought), which is not discursive reasoning but intuitive, timeless, beholding all things in one moment. Thought is itself a unity, but is the ground of all difference, and thus contains plurality within itself.[2] It possesses five categories, namely, being, movement, fixity, identity, and difference. This intelligible world is also the home of the supersensuous Ideas (adapted from Plato), the operative powers, spirits and angels. Here, too, Thought creates soul, which contains the archetypal Ideas, and is still timeless, though on the confines of the temporal world. That is to say, the world-soul is outside of the corporeal sphere, but gives rise to

[1] For an interpretation of this term see *The Neo-Platonists*, by Thos. Whitaker. London, 1901.

[2] See Benn, *The Greek Philosophers*, vol. ii., p. 302 *et seq.*

matter according to the creative archetypes, and thus, since spirit becomes matter, the dualism of spirit and matter is overcome. The cosmic soul also gives rise to the lesser or partial souls, such as our own. After these derivative or particular souls comes the phenomenal world, and so on down to the lowest forms of matter, which are dark and empty, far from the light of spirit, so far degraded as to be utterly foreign to the First. For, although the world results from the fall of the soul, which is a product of Thought, while Thought is itself a product of the First, it is impossible to reason back from the world to the First, nor can the world be logically deduced from that One. Thought is only a product of the First, not an attribute, a designing activity, or will; and Thought is still a unity. But the phenomenal world is the domain of division, change, natural necessity, space, and time. It is without any true reality, a sort of shadow of being, which practically amounts to non-being. That is, the soul, as light, was under a kind of compulsion to become darkness, spirit must become matter; but matter is so alien to the light that it is the source of evil, hollow and empty; and there is no way back to being. In other words, the world is a sort of concession to the finite. It is impossible to learn what reality is by studying phenomena, or even the causes of phenomena. "All investigation of

nature was here annulled," says Windelband,[1] "but the door to all forms of faith and superstition was opened."

Thus the Neo-Platonic system creates a greater difficulty than it sought to overcome. The ultimate Being has been so far removed from the world, even from Thought, that there is no describable connection which is not immediately qualified, since the First is somehow one, while all this long series of descents from Thought to the souls of men, and from the human down into the dark abysses of matter, is the sphere of diversity. The series of descents is developed in minute detail. For example, the essence of man is said to consist in his higher nature. But there is also a lower soul, so that the passions reside partly in the lower soul, partly in the body, and are merely perceived by the higher soul. The will is free, but evil is involuntary, and is due to the soul's combination with matter, its imprisonment in the flesh. Thus fettered, the soul, although immortal, and in a sense unmixed with the body, which it uses as an instrument, is condemned to the hardships of migration and retribution, and longs to be set free. Happiness consists in the perfect life of thought, independent of external circumstances; and liberation comes at last through purification, victory over the passions, and asceticism. Yet

[1] *History of Ancient Philosophy*, p. 373, English translation.

here, again, we are still far from the ultimate goal.[1] For how is the soul to pass from this lower realm of struggle and separateness to the eternal bliss of oneness with Deity? To answer this question we must try to follow Neo-Platonism to its greatest height.

Here is a very explicit passage from Plotinus which clearly suggests the great problem of his system and sums up much that I have said:

> For the One whose nature it is to generate all things cannot be any of those things itself. Therefore it is neither substance nor quality nor reason nor soul, neither moving nor rest; not in place, not in time but unique in its kind, or rather kindless, being before all kind, before motion, and before rest, for these belong to being, are that to which its multiplicity is due. Why, then, if it does not move is it not at rest? Because while one or both of these must be attributed to being, the very act of attribution involves a distinction between subject and predicate, which is impossible in the case of that which is absolutely simple.[2]

If the One cannot properly be an object of knowledge, but must be apprehended by something higher, what is the resource? To attain a living realisation, find, not the *cause* of existence but *existence itself*, the primordial One which is

[1] See Windelband, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, p. 374.

[2] *Enn.*, VI., ix., 3; quoted by Benn, *Greek Philosophers*, vol. ii., p. 311.

everywhere and nowhere. Philo [1] described this highest state of apprehension as a passive, receptive condition of contemplation, where all self-activity is transcended and reason is silent; where there is a feeling of unity, where there is naught to desire. This state is a gift of Deity, not a condition which we may attain by any describable activity of our own. Nor can we define God even after thus obtaining a vision of His glorious essence. For God is more perfect than perfection itself; no name can stand for the divine majesty; we only know *that* God is, not *what* He is.

Plotinus follows Philo in this description. All thought is said to be inferior to this ecstasy, since thought implies desire, whereas the ecstasy is *rest* in God. This exalted state is a kind of rapture, accompanied by a sense of singleness, a feeling of unity with the ground of the total universe, a sinking into the All-one, a purification where all distinctions are lost, where there is no longer individuality, but where one's being is filled with divine light. The state is not the ground of any inference, it is not a process of knowledge but is an internal quietude, and on the human side a state of waiting for the divinity to appear. But we are warned that even this description is entirely inadequate. The experience is incommunicable.

[1] See Windelband, *History of Philosophy*, p. 227, second American edition.

Although it is not to be known in terms of thought, it may be known from itself, by having it. The way to know God is to be God.

The noticeable characteristic of this theory is the wide gap which separates the First alike from the worlds of thought and of nature. From pure Thought downwards there is, as we have seen, a continuous series. The Logos doctrine of Philo, with the angels, archetypes, and creative powers, served to mediate between the theories of spirit and matter; and by purification the soul could reascend to the plane of Thought. Thus the rational system was complete below the level of Thought. But beyond that level no mortal could go, nor was it possible to return from the beatific height and establish any logical connection with pure Thought and the orders of being below it. The utmost that one could do was to ascend to the domain of Thought and there await the divine blessing. Having been caught up in ecstasy, the soul was only able on its return to utter the disappointing, negative statements which we have already recorded. One would suppose nothing to be simpler than to infer that the First is the logical ground of Thought and its differentia, the world and its variety. For, since the First produced Thought, and Thought gave rise to all else, does it not follow that the First is an infinitely rich ground of all differences, ought we not to lift rea-

son to the highest sphere and reform the utterly negative account of the First? Is it not then rationally possible to account for the ecstasy as a sort of vision, in one moment, of that which the intellect may thereafter proceed to unfold? Is it not an illusion to say that the human soul "fell" and that it "becomes" God? Is it not irrational to declare that the cosmos is a mere "overflow" without definite connection with the constitution of the First? Why assert that the First is utterly unknowable, when we know so much about it that we can say precisely what it is not?

This is what common sense would say; not so Plotinus. He offers every aid to the soul to attain liberation, including the enjoyment of beauty, usually withheld from ascetic devotees. But rational thought is hopelessly subordinate. It does not accord with the spirit of that age to look for an intellectual approach to the highest reality, and the intellect is deemed wholly incapable of describing the noblest state of the soul. When, therefore, Plotinus had his visions he seems to have regarded them as miracles. Zeller holds [1] that Plotinus was undoubtedly personally acquainted with the ecstatic condition, and it is said that four times during his earthly career Plotinus was caught up into this superconscious condition. Without doubt these first-hand experiences were

[1] *Greek Philosophy*, p. 339, English translation.

the primary basis of the philosophising of Plotinus.[1] The form he chose to clothe his thought in was his peculiar synthesis of the doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, and other philosophers, tempered by the spirit of his age, and perhaps confirmed by traditions from the East. But it is clear that his whole system is affected by the prejudicial ideas which he held concerning the intellect. Plato's mythical dialogue, the *Timæus*, seems to have been a leading source of his inspiration. One misses that profound and sanely rational theory of organisation which makes Plato's *Philebus* so important.

Let us turn, now, from this negative conclusion to the doctrine of another great seer who dwelt with God, and note how his conclusions contrast with those of Plotinus, namely, Spinoza, frequently spoken of as the "God-intoxicated man." Cast out of the synagogue on account of his heretical views, condemned in the most extravagant terms as an atheist and worse, this heroic lover of truth will always be one of the greatest figures in the history of thought. It would be impossible in brief space to do justice either to his life or to his philosophy. For our present purposes the life of Spinoza is interesting on account of its central interests. Spurned and cast out by the world,

[1] See Inge's searching criticism of Plotinus and his trances, *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 96–99.

Spinoza felt an even greater necessity to find a road to peace and eternal truth than did the Alexandrian mystics of old. He tells us in his essay *On the Improvement of the Understanding* that he tried some of the usual methods of attaining satisfaction but found them all fruitless. What he longed for was somewhat which should give him continuous, supreme, and unending happiness, an eternal, abiding object of love. It became clear that nothing finite, limited, could give this satisfaction. For nothing in its own nature may rightfully be called either perfect or imperfect; only by discovering fixed laws, the eternal order to which all things are related, may one find peace. That is, one must discover the relation existing between one's self and the whole of nature, and acquire a character which shall give stability. That Spinoza actually found the peace for which he sought must be evident to every reader of the *Ethics*, however one may differ from some of its conclusions.

Spinoza does not indulge in the usual language of the mystic, and there is nothing to indicate that he had separately marked experiences, such as the four ecstasies of Plotinus. Yet, if to be a mystic means to dwell consciously with God, to be filled with the divine presence, probably no seer ever dwelt on the heights more steadily than the lonely lens-maker and philosopher of Amsterdam. There

was perhaps even more reason for the employment of mystical terms than in the case of the Neo-Platonists. But let us note how different is the account which Spinoza gave of the great vision. Whether or not Spinoza ascended to the heights and descended, at any rate he arrived at precisely the opposite conclusion from that of Plotinus. The subtitle of Spinoza's great work, the *Ethics*, is "Ordina Geometrica Demonstrata." To him, the whole subject of God's nature and its relationships, and the emotional states of man, is as clear a field of investigation as that of mathematics.

Spinoza begins by defining Substance, its attributes and modes. He then proceeds by a series of axioms, propositions, and proofs to develop in rigidly logical order his conception of God, as absolutely infinite and perfect Substance; to show the relation of God to nature, and explain the relationships of mind and body, mind and the emotions, man and God. The entire undertaking is of the utmost possible exactness. It is one of the most heroic attempts in any language to put that which is great and holy and universal into the form of a precise system. Spinoza starts with the demonstrated existence of God, conceived as possessing a perfectly definable nature, that is, so far as known to us through the two attributes of thought and extension; then goes on to deduce the entire world-order as necessarily following from

God's infinite perfection. As in the Neo-Platonic system, creation is not due to an assignable design, but results because it is possible. Yet the reason that no creative plan is assignable to God is that such an idea would be reading our petty notions into the divine mind. Possessed of an infinite number of attributes, God has given existence to the world because it was His nature to express Himself in an infinite number of ways. All things have been brought into being in the highest perfection, since they came from a wholly perfect source, and they could not have come forth in any other way.[1] Everything is precisely what it is because of the perfect essence of God. Likewise, everything in the realms of thought and extension follows from strict necessity, and all is immediately referable to the nature of God. To study the human mind is to find the pathway to the highest blessedness, since one may only know that mind in deepest truth as part of the being of God.[2]

Thus in life it is before all things useful to perfect the understanding, or reason, as far as we can, and in this alone man's highest happiness or blessedness consists; indeed, blessedness is nothing else but the contentment of spirit which arises from the intuitive knowledge of God; now to perfect the understanding is nothing else but to understand God, God's

[1] *Ethics*, Part I., xxxiii., note 2.
[2] See *Ethics*, Part II., preface.

attributes, and the actions which follow from the necessity of His nature.[1]

Nature is not degraded to the category of appearance; the visible world of nature is God in passive form. Every fact in nature is part of a logical sequence whose exact basis is knowable in the divine essence. Not only is thought elevated to the position of a divine attribute, but, in sharp contrast to the Neo-Platonic doctrine, the rational power in man is expressly accredited with those powers which Plotinus denies to it. Spinoza has place for several kinds of knowledge, beginning with that which arises by hearsay, through perception, the imagination, etc. But it is the nature of reason to proceed from an "adequate idea of the absolute essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things." [2] That is, reason is able to perceive things "under the form of eternity," without any relation to time, namely, as they really and necessarily are.

The more our rational knowledge increases the more we know about the real nature of God, and the more we partake of the divine nature. Thus the spirit becomes tranquil, the storms and conflicts of passion cease. For knowledge is power, and the better we understand our emotions and

[1] *Ethics*, Part IV., Appendix iv. The quotations are from Elwes's translation, Bohn Library.

[2] *Ibid.*, Part II., xi., note 2.

other mental states the more control we have over them. The spirit of joy fills the soul as this true knowledge advances, man becomes free, is inspired by good-will to all his fellows, lifted above all carping and deceit, more and more absorbed in the love of God. "He who clearly and distinctly understands himself and his emotions loves God . . . this love towards God must hold the chief place in the mind." [1]

This love towards God is eternal, it is the highest attainment of man. Spinoza expressly terms it "the intellectual love of God," that is, he carries the idea of intellect to the very highest pinnacle of beatitude; man's noblest state is rational through and through. Yet, this highest state is as surely, as truly, a participation in God. Here is what Spinoza says of it:

The intellectual love of God is that very love whereby God loves Himself, not in so far as He is infinite, but in so far as He can be explained through the essence of the human mind regarded under the form of eternity; in other words, the intellectual love of the mind towards God is part of the infinite love wherewith God loves Himself. . . . From what has been said we clearly understand wherein our salvation, or blessedness, or freedom consists, namely, in the constant and eternal love towards God, or in God's love towards men.[2]

[1] *Ethics*, Part V., xv.
[2] *Ibid.*, Part V., xxxvi., Prop. and note.

That is, Spinoza describes the highest state so that he almost loses sight of the human attitude altogether. Yet in a measure he preserves it, and explicitly shows what he means by his terms, the relationship of man's vision to the glory and perfection of God. "The essence of our mind consists solely in knowledge, whereof the beginning and the foundation is God, it becomes clear to us in what manner and way our mind . . . constantly depends on God." [1] Elsewhere Spinoza explains that by the term "knowledge," as here used, he means intuitive knowledge. That is, it is immediate insight into the being of God and the nature of man, yet it is intuitive in a rational sense, and may be rationally unfolded. This part of the mind is eternal and is therefore able to survive all change. For, as a mode of thinking, it is part of the infinite and eternal intellect of God, part of the life of virtue, the religion of blessedness, the divinest joy. Thus Spinoza makes the transition to that which is ordinarily denominated "spiritual." Thus he suggests, as language has seldom suggested, what must have been the peace and contentment of his soul.

The reason for choosing the geometrical method of demonstration is found in the age in which Spinoza lived. It was a time of great mathematical discoveries, the age of mechanical philosophy.

[1] *Ethics*, Part V., xxxvi., note.

By putting his thought in geometrical form Spinoza was simply carrying out his philosophical inheritance. That this form has serious defects is at once apparent, for it gives a severe, austere tone to the *Ethics* which is likely to be forbidding to those who are in search of spiritual things. The reader finds it necessary to live with Spinoza in his rigidly precise geometrical world till the mind becomes accustomed to the rigidity and begins to realise the depth of Spinoza's thought. One discovers, in due course, that the forbidding form of the *Ethics* is in a sense, secondary. As the argument draws to a close, Spinoza seems at times to forget his own allegiance to strict logic and permits the reader to obtain glimpses of the austere reasoner lost in contemplation. These occasional leaps forward over the rough places of the more toilsome pathway suggest that for Spinoza the unclouded vision, the *real presence*, was the prime essential. He fully intends to make good every step in his progress to the supernal heights. On the whole, his undertaking is strikingly successful. Were he able to profit by the verdicts of time he would doubtless make his logical structure still stronger; he would have no reason to confess that he had failed. Yet one cannot help noting these suggestions of yet greater depth of truth. It is because Spinoza permits himself to pass from the human point of view to the divine, and show us

God in the act of loving man, where a moment before it was man loving God, that one is the more convinced of the rational method. For Spinoza does not even for a moment permit himself to be disloyal to reason, to forget that this very love is at the same time the essence of the infinite intellect, the rational constitution of God.

Thus we find in Spinoza much that is denied to us by Plotinus. We see that one is perfectly justified in drawing inferences from the beatific vision, in supplying through reason all that the momentary insight beholds "under the form of eternity." As matter of fact, Plotinus does draw inferences, as all mystics must the moment they use human speech. But Plotinus seems to be unaware of the positive value of his own inferences. There are certain striking resemblances between his "First" and Spinoza's "Substance," which show that in both systems the main effort is to describe the relation of all things to the divine essence. In each case ultimate Being is unique, self-sufficient, absolute, infinitely perfect. In each case creation is a necessary consequence of this perfection, causation is immanent, and final causes are lacking. The system which is deduced in Spinoza's case is far more simple than Neo-Platonism. Plotinus believes in a wealth of intermediaries which have no place in the *Ethics* of Spinoza, and the psychology of the latter is differ-

ent. But there are so many points of resemblance that Plotinus's system, corrected where it is most in error, might become the philosophy of Spinoza. That is, Plotinus sunders the finite from the infinite, degrades nature, because he does not see that by very definition there can be no separation between the First and all that necessarily overflows from it.

The First of Plotinus corresponds to the infinitely perfect Substance of Spinoza in so far as Spinoza is unable to tell us what are the other attributes of God besides the two we know. The attributes of thought and extension in Spinoza's system are represented by Thought and its products in Neo-Platonism, although Thought and Nature are erroneously sundered from the First. In both systems it is eternal intuition which reveals the infinite background. In both systems the life of purification from and control of the emotions leads the way to the perfect life of thought. Spinoza does not forget that the love of God is intellectual, hence he makes good his account of the divine beatitude. Plotinus has all the essentials wherewith to bridge over the chasm to the infinite but he has lost the clue to their unification. Each gives back his own temperament coloured by the thought of his age, and each confesses that for him the vision, the experience, the love, was itself more real than

the faulty report which the most explicit language could convey.

The question whether either Plotinus or Spinoza offered a satisfactory explanation of concrete human life is of course another matter. Our present interest is limited to the evidences of a higher or eternal order and the striking diversities of method which our two seers display. It is once more made clear that there is a reality in mystic intuition to which we must accord a high place. But it is no less clear that the negations of mysticism are entirely unnecessary. There is nothing in the intuition of the eternal that cannot be rationally unified. If Spinoza fails in part, Plato and Emerson point the way to success. No study of the divine order is more instructive than the one which thus reveals the harmony underlying widely contrasted systems of thought.

CHAPTER X

THE OPTIMISM OF LEIBNIZ

LEIBNIZ is the typical harmoniser and optimist. There were optimists before his time, and Leibniz was himself greatly indebted to Plato. In England, Shaftesbury was independently developing a similar doctrine at the same time,[1] and it is probable that the popular exposition of optimism, Pope's *Essay on Man*, was more directly derived from Shaftesbury than from the more thoroughly wrought theory of Leibniz. But it was Leibniz who reaped the full benefits of the age of mechanical philosophy and developed optimism into a complete system. Shaftesbury was not primarily interested in the development of a metaphysical system, and Pope was no philosopher. The *Essay on Man* is commonly supposed to be purely optimistic, but close examination shows that it contains pessimistic notions derived from the satirical author of *The Fable of the Bees*, Mandeville, who in part anticipated the pessimism

[1] Shaftesbury's *Moralists* was published in 1709; the *Theodicée* of Leibniz was published in 1710.

of Schopenhauer. It is to Leibniz that we must turn for the source of many popular optimisms. To study his philosophy is, in fact, not only to see optimism at the best advantage, but to carry the theory as far as it can be carried. The study is of fundamental significance for students of the various conceptions of the divine order.

Leibniz was rather more a man of the world than most of the seers who have had the great insight into the divine beauty. He was a man of varied interests, not only a philosopher but a statesman, scientific scholar, theologian, historian, and the like. He was educated for the law, and held numerous positions, finally that of librarian at Hanover. He travelled extensively and knew many of the most famous men of his time, among them Spinoza. From earliest boyhood he was not only a wide reader but a thorough student. His philosophy was, therefore, no mere eclecticism or æsthetic combination of pleasing elements; it was a closely thought-out system, based on precise logical principles, the work of a great mind. Leibniz was great in all the subjects to which he devoted attention, and has long been famous as a mathematical genius and discoverer as well as a philosopher. Indeed, he was one of the few most remarkable intellectual men of all time, and author of an almost incredible number of treatises on history, politics, mathematics, and philosophy, some

of which still lie in the library at Hanover in manuscript form, awaiting the time when some one shall complete the task of translating and editing his works. His was a universal mind, not content with any one pursuit, or any single point of view. He was so deeply interested in his scholarly pursuits that he would sometimes sit for several days at a time in his chair, and have his food brought to him at favourable intervals.

Born in Leipzig, in 1646, the son of a professor of philosophy, Leibniz so early evinced fondness for learned books that at the age of six or seven his father's library was thrown open to him, and by the time he was fourteen he had sketched out his system of philosophy. He found good in all the books he read, and he read not to confute but to learn. His biographer tells us that "he spoke well of everybody, and made the best of everything." He enjoyed the society of men of all types, and believed he could learn even from the least enlightened. Yet he read not only to master, but if possible to add something to, every science he studied. He was equally at home in several languages, and wrote learned works in Latin, French, and German. His great desire seems to have been to cultivate all sides of his nature, to be an all-round great man. His own life was thus typical of his philosophy.

It is seldom that the love of exact method and of

mathematics is found in combination with appreciation of that which is spiritual and also united with accurate knowledge of the history of philosophy. All this was united in Leibniz with a profound love of beauty, order. Leibniz possessed a keen eye for the infinitely slight differences by which things are distinguished and by which they shade into one another. This penetrative insight revealed to him the beautiful gradations by which the harmony of the universe is attained. His philosophy is thus the work of an artist who has the finest insight into details. One of his great principles is continuity. He cannot bear the thought of rough edges and gaps in things. Everything must harmonise imperceptibly with its neighbours. "Nature never makes leaps." There are no voids or bare spots. From the very beginnings of perception and motion up to the highest domain of religion, there is everywhere gradual transition. Life is a continuous whole, the universe is an organism, and only by understanding the minute details can one appreciate the harmony of the great totality.

The particular doctrines which Leibniz sought to harmonise were the opposed conceptions of substance maintained by the Greek Atomists, on the one hand, and by Spinoza, on the other. He also sought to overcome the dualism between mind and matter which was inculcated by Des-

cartes, as well as to find a way of uniting the religious interests and the mechanical philosophy of his time. Let us consider these theories for a moment, that we may understand how Leibniz approached his problem.

The objection to atomism is that if absolutely hard, indivisible units of matter exist there can be no real unity, no continuity in the world. According to this hypothesis the world is merely a collection of little particles endlessly and blindly combining in new arrangements. On the other hand, "Substance," as conceived by Spinoza, is a unit in such a strict sense of the word that there can be no parts. Spinoza held that Substance, absolutely perfect and infinite, is all that exists. Substance is known to man only through two of its attributes, thought and extension. This world which you and I behold is actually God Himself, that is, as revealed by the attribute of extension; what we call mind is God known as thought. Creation is not the result of choice or divine fiat, it does not exist for a particular end. What exists is here of necessity; it follows from the nature of God, just as the characteristics of a geometrical figure follow from the exact nature of that figure. All that exists in the physical world is due to rigidly mathematical sequence in which each detail is the logical result of that which preceded it. Likewise, in the world of mind, all thoughts are

modes of God, exist under the attribute of thought, and are not to be regarded as in any way produced by the motions of matter or as causing changes in the material world. Only when we turn aside from this parallelism of mental and physical states to view things "under the form of eternity," is it possible for us to behold all things in unity. There are values in this way of thinking, notably the conception of the intellectual love of God. But we are now considering the doctrine as it appeared to Leibniz. Absolute unity could never satisfy a mind like Leibniz, with his high regard for individuality.

Nor was the dualism of Descartes acceptable. Descartes started, as everybody knows who has read modern philosophy, with the fact of self-consciousness, a fact which is the more firmly established the more persistently we try to doubt it. For even to doubt is to be conscious, to know that in doubting, I, the doubter, exist. From the fact of self-consciousness Descartes turned to the proof of God's existence and the study of the world of nature. Nature Descartes described as a mechanical system, while the animal body he regarded as an automaton. Hence mind and body were for him sharply contrasted.

To overcome these sharp contrasts and at the same time develop a satisfactory theory of substance, Leibniz proposed his famous theory of

Monads. The Monads were described as simple substances, without parts, extensionless, formless, indestructible by natural means, each different from every other and each in constant activity. Out of these simple elements all things are composed. The Monads should not be thought of as physical elements. They are not hard like the atoms, and cast about at random. It would be nearer the truth to compare them to conscious elements, to living cells endowed with mind. For, as we have seen, Leibniz is a great believer in continuity. According to his theory of nature mind is not introduced at some point in evolution, but is present all along the line of development. Even in the lowest forms of life perception exists. The lowest forms of life are not pre-conscious but un-conscious. From this unconscious state up to the highest forms of mental life there is gradual transition. The sleeping unconscious gradually becomes the conscious, and finally leads to the self-conscious.

Movement and life are due to mental activity which originates from within. The elements are not cast about by chance, but each possesses a principle of spontaneous activity, so that there is nothing in nature which is sundered from life and mind. Each physical form has its dominating Monad, its principle of life. Thus the real nature of a thing, even of a rock, is only found when we

penetrate in thought to its mental constitution. Hence mind and matter are nowhere sundered. There is continuity throughout the cosmos. The soul of man is a higher Monad, a spiritual being, a distinct individual. Just as in nature no two things are alike, so in the inner world soul differs from soul. That is, the Monads are not describable in quantitative terms; they differ in quality. Each soul is therefore unique. We should think of one another not as substances, but as individuals. You and I mirror the universe in our private way. Each of us has a little world of his own wherein the great universe is reproduced in individual fashion.

> It is the knowledge of necessary and eternal truths that distinguishes us from the mere animals and gives us *Reason* and the sciences, raising us to the knowledge of ourselves and of God. And it is this in us that is called the rational soul or mind.[1]

Thus Leibniz conducts his readers, step by step, into the precincts of the soul, where the purpose of life is seen. We have left the material universe of atomism, yet we have found other and nobler elements which take the place of atoms. We have preserved the conception of substance, but we have found room for real parts, real finite beings. For our souls are not in reality one great being.

[1] *The Monadology*, § 29, Latta's translation.

We really exist as beings of inherent worth. And by following Leibniz thus far we have entered the inner world to find ourselves on the confines of modern idealism. Real life can only be known in terms of mind. Within your consciousness and mine the life of the great organism is revealed; you see it in your inner revelation: I represent it according to my peculiar constitution. Yet each of us belongs to the whole. There could be no real whole without real parts. But with such parts an infinitely glorious system is possible.

Having mounted thus far, we turn to the great thought of organism. To understand the meaning and beauty of our life, we must turn our thought upward to the infinite perfection of God. The richness, the beauty and wisdom of God are such that He needs an infinite number of beings to reveal His glory. Only when the perfection of things is represented from all possible points of view can the divine beauty be made known. Hence the wonders and glories of the visible universe, hence the continuity of life from lowest to highest; and hence, above all, the life of man with its great variety. All things and beings belong to one vast system wherein all perfection is made manifest. In it all there is no break, no discord not essential to the harmony of the whole.

Thus the basis of optimism is the conception of God as perfect, all-wise, happy, infinitely good,

and beautiful. In His omniscience, God foresaw all possibilities, all kinds of worlds that could exist.

As in the Ideas of God there is an infinite number of possible universes, and as only one of them can be actual, there must be a sufficient reason for the choice of God, which leads Him to decide upon one rather than another. And this reason can only be found in the *fitness*, or the degrees of perfection, that these worlds possess, since each possible thing has the right to aspire to existence in proportion to the amount of perfection it contains in germ.[1]

Endowed with foresight of all these possibilities God chose the best world-order. Hence our universe could not be better than it is. It is not the only possible world, but the *best* system that could exist consistently with the greatest amount of happiness, harmony, and goodness. It is not absolutely perfect, for such perfection belongs to God alone, and if it were perfect it would be indistinguishable from God. But it is the best of possible worlds, the nearest perfect that a world could be, as the expression of God. Unlike the mystics, Leibniz does not identify the world with God. Pope's line would not then apply to this account of things, namely,

Whose body nature is, and God the soul.

[1] *The Monadology*, §§ 53, 54.

It is one of the merits of Leibniz that he was able to avoid mystical confusions. The world, for him, is the detailed revelation of the perfection of God. The Monads, or souls, are real individuals, not mere parts of a monotonous whole. Each possesses and expresses, as well as mirrors, the world in its own way.[1] Each is a little world of harmony in itself, the most harmonious it could be and yet be its particular self. Thus the only imperfection in the whole is due to the necessary limitation by which things and beings exist as individual. What is called "evil" is simply a want, a defect due to the fact that the individual is limited to a particular type of life, and a unique phase of that type. The imperfections of the limited being thus point forward to God, the Monad of monads, in whom all limitations are overcome, in which all is really perfect that is only potentially perfect in the finite individuals.

If, now, we ask how it can be that all things work out together in one harmonious whole, the answer is that God, in choosing the best of possible worlds, also harmoniously established every detail of that which ever was to exist. The world-plan is complete in every respect, in minutest detail. The Creator who foresaw was perfectly able to provide. All His activities are characterised by the fitness of things. He is eternally active, He is

[1] *The Monadology*, §§ 55–60.

pure activity, and creation is thus a continuous process. The Monads are flashings, as it were, of the celestial fire; they are sent forth when they are needed to complete the harmony. You and I went forth from the divine life in the fulness of time. Hence our lives are harmonious with the lives of all men; the universe is friendly, is congruous with you and with me.

The divine nature is thus the system of all the Monads, the sufficient reason for the existence of this great harmony. To know the sufficient reason is to know the ultimate cause, the ground, or plan. It is not adequate knowledge of causation to know the efficient causes of things: for example, the mechanical connection of any particular series of events in nature, such as the phenomena of vegetal growth. We must turn to the mental world to find final causes.[1] In man's body efficient causes only are seen, that is, forces acting on forces. Really to understand the meaning and place of the body we must turn to the soul, where is written the purpose, the ideal, or end which the body subserves. But to understand the purpose exemplified in the soul we should turn once more to God, in whose perfect world-plan the ultimate purpose is seen.

The principle of pre-established harmony is the complement of the law of sufficient reason. Thus

[1] *The Monadology*, § 79.

Leibniz overcame the dualism by which Descartes separated the soul and the body by declaring that the side-by-side correspondence of soul and body is due to the harmony prearranged between them.[1] When motion takes place in the body there is mental activity in the Monad in concord with it. Likewise between soul and soul there is complete harmony, so that you in your little world and I in mine represent or mirror the same great system of things; what you think and feel finds its fitness in what I think and feel.

We have no unrelated thoughts or feelings. When I, expressing the spontaneity with which I am endowed, make choice of an ideal, that ideal is congruous with the ultimate order of things; it finds its sufficient reason in the universal harmony. Therefore, I know that my ideal is sure to be realised, that it will not conflict either with your choice or with the will of God. The nature of the world-order being such as it is, it follows that things must develop as they do. Yet there is abundant room for individuality, since the plan of things includes the greatest variety consistent with harmony in the system as a whole.

The whole is in the highest sense a moral order.

Whence it is easy to conclude that the totality of all spirits must compose the City of God, that is to

[1] *Principles of Nature and of Grace*, § 3.

say, the most perfect State that is possible, under the most perfect of Monarchs. This City of God, this truly universal monarchy, is a moral world in the natural world, and is the most exalted and most divine among the works of God; and it is in that that the glory of God really consists, for He would have no glory were not His goodness known and admired by spirits. . . . If we could sufficiently understand the order of the universe, we should find that it exceeds all the desires of the wisest men, and that it is impossible to make it better than it is, not only as a whole and in general, but also for ourselves in particular.[1]

The moral order is as perfect in the same minute detail as the order of nature, and the harmony of the lower levels of life leads to the nobler perfection of the higher.

God as Architect satisfies in all respects God as Lawgiver, and thus . . . sins bear their penalty with them, through the order of nature, and even in virtue of the mechanical structure of things; and similarly . . . noble actions will attain their rewards. . . . This it is which leads wise and virtuous people to devote their energies to everything which appears in harmony with the presumptive or antecedent will of God.[2]

In so far as man rises to the level of awareness of his presence in the eternal City of God, he shares in

[1] *The Monadology*, §§ 85, 86, 90.
[2] *Ibid.*, §§ 89, 90.

the happiness of all, in the happiness of God. Love towards God is a direct way of approach to this happiness. In so far as each man feels that love, is aware of that harmony, he desires to play his part in the universe in the way that is most fitting, that contributes most to the total harmony.

Nothing is happier than God and nothing more beautiful or more worthy of happiness can be conceived. And since He possesses supreme power and wisdom, His happiness not only becomes a part of ours (if we are wise, that is, if we love Him), but even constitutes it.[1]

Thus it is only ignorance of what we truly are, and what our privilege in the universe is, that ever shuts us out from participation in this joy and service. If we really knew our true being we would never complain and never sin. We are in reality on the way to this City of God, even when confused by the darkness of ignorance. That very darkness is part of the harmony, but dimly made known. We are simply sleeping. In so far as we awaken, we come to consciousness; and to come to consciousness is to know the way to harmony, to learn that even now we are essential to the harmony of the whole.

Thus there is nothing lost in such a universe. All things are parts of the perfect whole, each is

[1] *On The Notions of Right and Justice.*

adapted to all and all is adapted to each: neither the whole nor the part is slighted. The world as conceived by Leibniz is large and roomy. No one is shut out, everybody is needed, and justice is having its perfect work. Leibniz is optimistic through and through, there are no reservations, there is no hostile power, nothing to defeat the perfect unfolding of the plan. Nor are there any mysteries. Man of course is man, and not God. Yet, in the life of the part the beauty of the whole is so made known that each has the clue to perfection. "All that is possible has claim to existence in proportion to its perfection." If that which you prefer does not exist in your life, you may know that it is because something better is to take its place. That other mode of life was possible, but it was not in keeping with other things which were more congruous with the whole.

Hence it is incumbent upon us, if we would know the harmony of things, share in the happiness and glory of God, to throw ourselves into unison with the life that is unfolding from within. Everything has been provided; it is for us to awaken and enjoy. The goal is before us all: let us bestir ourselves and strive for it, well knowing that there is no such word as fail.

There are logical difficulties in the working out of this system, but these need not concern us here. The essential is to grasp the main idea, the concep-

tion of harmony. In the first place, there is the thought of God, perfect, omniscient, good, and true. God is above all a God of order, hence He chose the world-plan which contained the highest possible degree of order. As an organism, the great universe therefore declares the orderly constitution of God. Hence the minutely adapted parts, the nice adjustments, the regularity of the stars in their courses and the rhythmical or mathematical sequence of things. The world of nature is like a great machine wherein no part is out of place or ill-made. Yet the mechanical order is only the lowest level in the universal organism. The comparison with a machine is inadequate. There is nothing dead or inert: the smallest particles of matter are teeming with life.[1] Moreover, everything aspires, there are "little perceptions" which point upwards to the fulness of conscious life. The subconscious world leads up to the conscious. In the soul of man there are final causes, moral and spiritual ends. Yet the City of God in which each soul dwells is not an isolated heaven, like the supernatural kingdom of Christian theology; it is the moral order of the total universe and includes all men, not Christians alone. The moral order is a higher degree of the same harmonious system of nature. There is no wall or break between, but rather an increase of the divine

[1] *The Monadology*, § 66.

glory, since the beauty of God is there most fully revealed:

Besides the world or the aggregate of finite things there is a certain unity which is dominant, not only as the soul is dominant in me, or rather as the ego itself is dominant in my body, but also in a much higher sense. For the dominant unity of the universe not only rules the world, but constructs or fashions it. It is higher than the world and, so to speak, extramundane, and is thus the ultimate reason of things. For the sufficient reason of existence cannot be found either in any particular thing or in the whole aggregate and series of things. . . . You may, indeed, suppose the world eternal; but as you suppose only a succession of states, in none of which do you find the sufficient reason, . . . it is evident that the reason must be sought elsewhere. For in eternal things, even though there be no cause, there must be a reason which, for permanent things, is necessity itself or essence. . . . From this it is manifest that even by supposing the eternity of the world, we cannot escape the ultimate extramundane reason of things, that is to say, God. . . . The nature of the world being such as it is, it follows that things must happen in it just as they do.[1]

If we could know the full meaning of our life we should be God, in whom is perfect knowledge. Yet, though we cannot behold the perfect, we have

[1] *On the Ultimate Origination of Things.*

the assurance that the imperfect in us is complete in God. In Him is perfect justice, for example, whereas human beings are still striving towards justice; in Him are perfect love and wisdom, yet our lesser wisdom and love are not separated from Him except in degree. Every event in our lives points forward to its divine fulfilment; and while we cannot know the details in advance we know in general that all things will find their realisation in harmonious fulfilment. There is kinship everywhere, between nature and the "kingdom of grace," between man and the angels, the angels and the "best of Monarchs" in whose city all beings dwell. In that city not only does no good action fail to bring its due fulfilment, but every one is happy in proportion to his fulness of life. Even before the day of our fuller life arrives, the love of God enables us to enjoy a foretaste of our coming happiness. In this love our highest interest consists. This love gives perfect confidence in the goodness of things and in the wise government of their Author.

Thus the soul enters into real tranquillity, not into an artificial or stoical composure, but into genuine satisfaction with the order and perfection of things, that is to say, unqualified trust, happy restfulness. And in the ultimate working out of things we may know that although everything may not develop as we would have it, nevertheless

the greatest possible good for all will be achieved. Finally, we have the assurance that this universal completion of things will include both individual and social good; there will be neither sacrifice of individuality nor defeat of human interests. Our felicity will not be absolutely complete, for the beatific vision in the supreme sense is beheld by God alone. Yet although there will always be desire unfulfilled, for us who are finite and do not wholly know God, there will be unending progress to new pleasures and new perfections, beyond which the supreme glory of God shall ever reign.[1]

Thus the optimism of Leibniz is at once mathematically exact and in its way mechanical, yet it is at the same time religious. The progressive life of the Monads, even the soul of man, is an unfolding from within. The development of things and ideas is as regular as the rhythmic ticking of two clocks, wound up and started at the same instant. Strictly speaking, there is not a new moment in the universe, for every detail had to be foreseen and provided for by the great Architect. This is the less attractive side of the picture. Leibniz carries his harmony too far. One would prefer elasticity, freedom to experiment, make mistakes, and profit by experience. Why, in fact, as Professor James has argued,[2] should there be a

[1] *On the Ultimate Origination of Things.*
[2] *The Will to Believe.*

world at all, if all details are foreknown and predetermined? Leibniz might reply that even if all was foreknown in the infinite mind, the world-plan would not be complete unless objectified, unless there actually were a universe of infinite variety, with all its complexity of life within the organism of Monads. But the practical man would reply that it is rather poor consolation to be told that "there is as much happiness as possible." The mere fact that the struggles and joys of this life of ours exist side by side proves that their existence was "possible." Common sense shows that the universe is a harmony, such a harmony that just what we find in the world can coexist. Everything that is was possible. But that does not explain *why* just this combination came to be: it brings no satisfaction to the philanthropist who is oppressed by the fact of sin and evil.

The "best" world would seem to be a realm of freedom, a society of souls possessing the power of choice and initiative, the kind of world-order which leaves the greatest room for individual experiment. The world in which we actually find ourselves is obviously such a world, for man is surely "free to stray," hence he is free to choose the moral ideal. The harmony of human society is yet to be attained. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." The element of uncertainty is part of the zest of life. We feel that there is

important work for each of us to do. We must organise for righteousness and bend every effort to make things come out right. If we could know in advance that the whole working of things together for good was predetermined, there would obviously be no reason for our moral zeal. If knowledge be a mere unfoldment, why should we pursue truth? Why not sit down at our ease and observe it as it unrolls?

The attempt of Leibniz to describe the divine order fell short; his optimism partook of and was limited by the thought of his age, and that thought was mechanical. He himself acknowledges the inadequacy of his account. But no one can know that his words fall short unless he already sees beyond them. We must allow for the "over-beliefs," —that which a writer would express if he could. Perhaps Leibniz has succeeded as well as any one in what he undertook. His doctrine is in many respects permanently valuable, and has in part become a part of our scientific thinking.

For example, the idea of the development of consciousness from a sleeping to a self-conscious condition, the conception of subconsciousness, is now perfectly familiar to us. Again, his theory of gradations, of continuity, both in the physical world and in the mental, is a permanent contribution. This imperceptible shading of one thing into another is precisely what we find in nature.

But more important still is the theory of the soul as primarily an *active* being, as possessing its own principle of spontaneity. It is but one step from the description of the higher Monads, or souls, as mirroring the world, to the later idealism of the self whose experience is a realm of "representation." The uniqueness of the soul, on which Leibniz insists, counts for a good deal.

If one were to choose between his principles, where there is conflict, one would select his individualism, his plurality of independent selves. That each self mirrors the world in a unique way is one of the profoundest discoveries of idealism. Finally, there is the great thought of the universe as an organism in which all the parts are mutually adjusted—one of the noblest of all philosophical conceptions. If we are not ready to believe that society is thus organised, we may at least declare it to be true of nature; and it is an inspiring ideal for all humanity. Furthermore, the conception of the universe as manifesting the orderliness of God, puts before the mind a picture of nature's beauty as grounded in the eternal Being, "embosomed in beauty." The universe is a harmony. Whether it be the "best of all possible worlds," or, better still, the best world unqualifiedly, we cannot in our finitude tell. But the majority of those who lift their eyes in adoration to the sky are inclined to believe that this is the best world without

qualification. As Leibniz says, it gives one great confidence in things to hold that all is for the best. It inspires great love for God, the quickening love which is the strongest stimulus to action. Possibly the optimistic trust of which he speaks is far more sound than the anxious zeal of the moral reformer who feels that he must hustle to bring things out right—while there is yet time. It may also be true, as some very profound men have suggested, that when we apparently exercise free-will we are really choosing that which God has already determined. At any rate, Leibniz assures us that what we choose is congruous with the harmony of things, so that, as Emerson says, "none of us can wrong the universe." And the morning and the evening stars sing delightfully together in the universe which Leibniz describes.

Let us therefore take leave of Leibniz with the thought of his comprehensive optimism prominently in mind.

It follows from the supreme perfection of God that in producing the universe He has chosen the best possible plan, in which there is the greatest variety along with the greatest order; ground, place, time, being as well arranged as possible; the greatest effect produced by the simplest ways; the most power, knowledge, happiness, and goodness in created things that the universe allowed. . . . Again, it follows from the perfection of the Supreme Author not only that the

order of the whole universe is the most perfect that can be, but also that each living mirror representing the universe, according to its point of view,—that is to say, each Monad, each substantial centre,—must have its perceptions and its desires as thoroughly well ordered as is compatible with all the rest. . . . It is not only a mirror of the universe of created things but also an image of the Deity. The mind has not merely a perception of the works of God, but is even capable of producing something which resembles them. . . . It is for this reason that all spirits, whether of men or of angels, entering in virtue of reason and of eternal truths into a kind of fellowship with God, are members of the City of God[1].

[1] *Principles of Nature and of Grace*, §§ 10, 12, 14, 15.

CHAPTER XI

THE METHOD OF EMERSON

IN one sense the method of Emerson is the secret of genius. The genius is to be accepted and studied, not analysed or imitated. Yet few great men have more fully revealed their secret than Emerson. It was part of his message to tell men how to be great in their way, as he was great in his. Hence there are many suggestions which, taken as a whole, outline an inner method. To combine these autobiographical confessions is to gain new insight into the meaning and place of Emerson's message,—the part he played in the thought of the nineteenth century.

It is sometimes said that Emerson is obscure. It has puzzled the rhetoricians to know how his sentences were put together. It is equally difficult for the logician to find their rational connection. Other critics complain that the great seer was unsocial, and that consequently there is a marked deficiency in his essays. Finally, the charge is brought that he had no method, therefore no system. I shall try to meet these objec-

tions by showing that Emerson had a method, the understanding of which is essential to the comprehension and classification of his philosophy.

All these criticisms belong together as judgments from the point of view of conventional standards. But Emerson was not conventional; and if we are to appreciate his genius we must know him for what he was, not condemn him for what he was not. He was a nonconformist in more senses than one. This was not because of a negative reaction from the standards of other men, but because his mind was occupied with other thoughts that were to him of far greater consequence. If we would have some inkling of those great thoughts, we must live with Emerson, try to observe the conditions which were for him supreme, and adore even as he adored. From the first sentence of his first essay, *Nature*, to the last of his utterances, Emerson declares his faith in the revelations of the living present, as opposed to the most sacred beliefs of the ages. God still lives; the Spirit speaks now as truly and as fully as ever. The hour wherein that voice is heard is holy, and should not be profaned by intermixture of other voices, for the essential is not what men have said but what made them say it. All accounts fail to do justice to that sublime message. To know that which none could report we must seek the solitudes of the Spirit. One need not always live in

solitude. The ideal is to carry the glad message to all mankind. But do not condemn him as unsociable who has had the vision which would make of all nations a kingdom of peace and light if all men could but behold it too. Hence Emerson says in *The Apology:*

> Think me not unkind and rude
> That I walk alone in grove and glen;
> I go to the god of the wood
> To fetch his word to men.

His biographers tell us of men who said that Emerson lived the holy life from his youth up, and the sentence is often quoted from the New Bedford auditor who declared that Emerson made the opening prayer and gave out the hymn as an angel would have spoken. There was that about him which showed that he was a citizen of a transcendental world where ideals were of nobler types. From the time of his epoch-making addresses in Cambridge, in his younger days, he was ever haunted by the thought of a larger man who would not permit himself to be narrowed to one occupation, who would never become absorbed in surfaces, but would live in constant remembrance of the eternal order. His whole life was dedicated to the making of "hints" of what he saw in the domain of the eternal Beauty, hints for all to follow who longed for fulness of life. It is

this element in his essays and poems which we must bear in mind if we would know why he wrote as he did. For he is ever confessing his inability to say what he would:

> The great Idea baffles wit,
> Language falters under it.

Of that ineffable essence which we call Spirit he that thinks most will say least. We can foresee God in the coarse, as it were, distant phenomena of matter; but when we try to define and describe Himself, both language and thought desert us, and we are as helpless as fools and savages.[1]

Yet Emerson is greatly displeased with that language which leaves God out. Better to try and try, and constantly fail, than be disloyal.

That which shows God in me, fortifies me. That which shows God out of me, makes me a wart and a wen. There is no longer a necessary reason for my being. Already the long shadows of untimely oblivion creep over me, and I shall decease for ever.[2]

The greatness of Jesus was that there at last was a man who was true "to what is in you and me." It is everything to know that the higher gleams of light which flash across the mind are not ours, but God's. We may not detect at first the

[1] *Nature.* [2] *Divinity School Address.*

difference between that which is human and that which is divine. But if we trust our instinct, court nature, overcome servitude to tradition, books, creeds, and models, we shall begin to enjoy first-hand power and insights. Then life will begin to be an adjustment between the divine moments and those that are for ever secondary. Books, for example, are for our idle hours. The one thing of value is the active soul, and man is truly active when he lives with God. "When we can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings." [1]

In the *Over-soul* Emerson has come nearest to telling what he meant by this divine element. The language is sometimes vague and ambiguous, but one can read between the lines.

> Man is a stream whose source is hidden. Our being is descending into us from we know not whence. I am constrained every moment to acknowledge a higher origin for events than the will I call mine. . . . I desire and look up and put myself in the attitude of reception, but from some alien energy the visions come. . . . Every man's words who speaks from that life must sound vain to those who do not dwell in the same thought on their own account. I dare not speak for it. My words do not carry its august sense; they all fall short and cold. Only itself can

[1] *The American Scholar.*

inspire whom it will, and behold! their speech shall be lyrical, and sweet, and universal as the rising of the wind.

No one can tell precisely what part of the higher life is of God alone, what from man, and no one need try; for in that ineffable union the soul is fulfilling its proper and highest function. That which flows into the soul is the universal life ere it is differentiated. The soul beholds wholes, essences, such as justice, love, power, back of and within their particular manifestation. Time is no longer a condition; the soul possesses time, and dissolves events into laws and values. Life is no less rich than before; the soul has lost nothing and is as truly individual; it has come to its own, found the real environment of all being. Hence the soul is able to anticipate the events of man's objective life. Men no longer seem to be isolated and meaningless fragments. There is a Somewhat that unites them all and which will inspire all. Call that One what you will, express it in your own way. Withal, be a man, do your work, pursue your interests to the end. But in all your calculations remember henceforth to take account of the highest law. Ground your life in that pure consciousness, and your whole thought will gradually expand to its great proportions.

Emerson lives in awareness of the same great

Presence when he is alone with nature, and his poems are often more successful than his prose in suggesting the "ineffable."

> If I could put my woods in song,
> And tell what's there enjoyed,
> All men would to my garden throng
> And leave the cities void.
>
> Wondering voices in the air,
> And murmurs in the wold,
> Speak what I cannot declare,
> Yet cannot all withhold.

The first great thought, then, is Emerson's poetic disclosure of his inner life, his belief in the environing Spirit as the supreme reality. In *Nature* he expresses this thought very clearly when he says:

> Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul he calls Reason; it is not mine or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men. And the blue sky in which the private earth is buried, the sky with its eternal calm and full of everlasting orbs, is the type of reason.

One must first be aware of this soul which animates all men, and to which all men are "inlets," in order to have somewhat to say; and if one have

found the Spirit, the expression will take care of itself. No plan of ours can equal the method of the Spirit.

> I cannot [says Emerson] nor can any man speak precisely of things so sublime, but it seems to me the wit of man, his strength, his grace, his tendency, his art, is the grace and the presence of God. It is beyond explanation. When all is said and done, the rapt saint is the only logician.[1]

On account of this belief in the Over-soul, and because of his many mystical sentences, Emerson has been frequently classed as a mystic in the negative sense. In the *Over-soul* he indulges in such expressions as these: "The act of seeing and the thing seen, the seer and the spectacle, the subject and the object, are one." With him the term "soul" meant interchangeably God or man; and in some sentences he practically loses sight of man. Some admirers of Hindoo mysticism have found such resemblances to Oriental pantheism that they declare Emerson to be an exponent of it in other terms. Again, devotees of Swedenborg have said that he derived his inspiration from the great mystic of the North. But Emerson is for ever Emerson. He borrowed freely, but only what expressed himself. It would be a serious mistake to judge him by his poem *Brahma*, which

[1] *Method of Nature.*

happens to be a literal rendering of a Hindoo idea. It would be equally erroneous to declare that his spiritual philosophy was borrowed from Swedenborg, who was only one of many who helped him to find himself.

Deeper than the fact of his borrowings was the discernment which enabled him to steer clear of the irrational and the visionary. Emerson is a wholly safe guide, whereas in the writings of Swedenborg one must sometimes make allowances for visionary exaggerations. Again, he is strong where Oriental pantheism is weak. One cannot even judge him by the mysticism of the *Over-soul*. It is necessary to put statement with statement, combine essay with essay, to find his total meaning. If in one sentence he is a pantheist, in ten he is an individualist of the most pronounced American type. His works are rather the correctives of most mystical systems. There is an entire absence of the assurance and ill-concealed dogmatism which so often make the claimants of mysticism offensive. Emerson makes no great claims for himself. He is no self-centred egoist. He simply endeavours to describe, as well as language can describe, the poetic facts of the higher life. He seeks to transcend the personal and the historical. That is precisely why he is so truly original, so decidedly himself. That is also why he really is a prophet of God, why one feels his revelations to

be genuine, not tinged with those suspicions of insanity which sometimes mar the writings of the mystics.

The typical mystic is one who becomes so filled with the divine vision, as he interprets it, that he forgets that he is interpreting. Hence he underestimates reason, denies the personal equation, and falls into all sorts of speculative absurdities, unaware that he is the more clearly revealing his own limitations. In his ecstasy, the mystic declares that this universe is God, or that he himself is Brahman, the Absolute. But Emerson does not tend that way; he is never disloyal either to man or to reason. He pleads above all for recognition of the divine presence, as each individual may know it. Thus Emerson stands in the front rank among the great seers of the ages who have brought God near. He really reveals God. The conduct which he advises men to adopt is the conduct of the devout theist, not that of the pantheist. He did not bid man lose himself in blissful contemplation. He did not counsel asceticism, nor was he in the least degree occult, pessimistic, or fond of the ecstatically abnormal. He neither exalted himself as a seer of visions, nor inculcated a method of self-absorption. His thought was distinctly ethical, as opposed to the implied denial of any real basis for ethics in all pantheistic systems. He enunciated a great law, called man's

attention to his infinite resources, the possibilities of guidance, of vigorous manliness. "We hear that we may speak," he said. Man is an active being. Each must play his part in the world; the fact that we are here shows that each of us can contribute his share. Instead of losing himself in ecstatic bliss, instead of sinking himself in the great whole, man should take the opposite course, namely, believe his own thought, express his own life, be not only "Man Thinking" but Man Acting.

> Your goodness must have some edge to it, else it is none. . . . Do your work and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. . . . Every new mind is a new classification. Insist on yourself; never imitate. Do that which is assigned to you, and you cannot hope too much or dare too much.[1]

It is because Emerson encourages every man to be himself, to reverence his private thought and reveal it as of real worth, that he has been so inspiring to multitudes of men. He declares that "into every intelligence there is a door which is never closed, through which the Creator passes." "That which each can do best, none but his Maker can teach him." "A man is entitled to be valued by his best moment." But we must grant the same privileges to every human soul. "You are trying to make that man another *you*. One 's

[1] *Self-Reliance.*

enough." "Nature never rhymes her children." We must remember both that "dedication to one thought is quickly odious," and that "the power of a man increases steadily by continuance in one direction." "Nothing is more rare in any man than an act of his own." Man must then learn that nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of his own mind, that "each individual soul is such by virtue of its being a power to translate the world into some particular language of its own." In so far as we have really lived and thought, and can abandon ourselves to the poetic expression of our individual experience, each of us has a message to give which no one else can report as well, which no one can imitate, which is essential even to God.

Emerson does not teach this self-trust because he believes, with some of the mystics, that we are in reality one great Being, but because truth is so great and life so rich that it needs us one and all to express it. God is not sufficient by Himself, but most have nature to reveal Him. Nature is inadequate; there must be human life, too. It makes little difference to Emerson what you call nature; you must at least respect it as of worth, as teaching its lesson, revealing its own beauty, yet eternally revealing the divine Being. God speaks to man through nature, but also in the inmost recesses of the soul. There is a sense in

which one must say that man and God are one, that the union is "ineffable in every act of the soul." It would be profane to undertake to draw a distinction and say: This much God said; this came from my own wit; there Spirit ceases, and here my poor self begins. The higher the soul is fted, and the more fully God speaks, the larger allowance must be made for that element which no analysis can detect. But no writer is more true than Emerson to the human side of this gracious union. The wonder and beauty of it all is made the greater by the constant reminder that these great moments are unusual, that they are but flashes of an indescribable glory which illumines the mind for a moment, only to leave it with a deepened sense of its own finitude. Emerson confesses that all the days are so uncomfortable while they pass that he wonders how he is ever able to accomplish anything.

> Our moods do not believe in each other. To-day I am full of thoughts, and can write what I please. I see no reason why I should not have the same thought, the same power of expression, to-morrow. What I write, whilst I write, seems the most natural thing in the world, but yesterday I saw a dreary vacuity in this direction where now I see so much; and a month hence I doubt not, I shall wonder who he was who wrote so many continuous pages.[1]
>
> [1] *Circles.*

Thus the human and the divine run side by side in Emerson, and we must take account of both factors, both his individual power and that which was beyond him.

Canst thou copy in verse one chime
Of the wood-bell's peal and cry,
Write in a book the morning's prime,
Or match with words that tender sky?
Wonderful verse of the gods,
Of one import, of varied tone;
They chant the bliss of their abodes
To man imprisoned in his own.

When Emerson admits his inability to say what he would, it is because he is so keenly aware of the tremendous conditions put upon one who would report the realities of things. He sees such truth alike in our finitude, in nature and in society, that he would fain be true to all. To sunder is to mar. Only "the perfect whole" suffices, yet in that boundless beauty all the parts reside, without injury or neglect. "A beauty not explicable is dearer than a beauty which we can see the end of."

Chide me not, laborious band,
For the idle flowers I brought;
Every aster in my hand
Goes home loaded with a thought.

There was never mystery
But 't is figured in the flowers;
Was never sacred history
But birds tell it in the bowers.

One harvest from thy field
Homeward brought the oxen strong;
A second crop thine acres yield,
Which I gather in a song.[1]

We are now prepared to understand what Emerson meant by saying that "our moods do not agree with each other." It is not because of any conflict in the great totality of things, nor is it because all moods are ultimately one, and man must become God in order to possess that one. It is the multiplicity of experiences, the pluralism in Emerson, rather than the mysticism, which is the clue to his thought. There is no mood large enough to harmonise all, no reason that can be assigned which shall be adequate. All these fragments are of worth in themselves; it would mar both their truth and their beauty to crowd them into any one formula. Therefore Emerson confessed his inability to give the reasons for his faith. Once, when an interested auditor besought him at the close of a lecture to explain what he meant by a certain sentence, he could only say, "I may have known when I wrote it, but I cannot tell

[1] *The Apology.*

now." To the end he continued to write what he called "anecdotes of the intellect," unable to supply a principle of unification. "The great gifts are not got by analysis," he insisted. "We do what we must and call it by the best names we can."

In one of his latest and most profound essays[1] Emerson says:

> I think that philosophy is still rude and elementary. It will one day be taught by poets. The poet is in the natural attitude—he is believing; the philosopher, after some struggle, having only reasons for believing.

At first glance this seems to be a negative confession, this dictum that our moods do not agree. It will be said that Emerson ought to have sought the reasons for his faith,—he should have aimed at rational consistency. But if he had pursued this method, would he have been Emerson? Is the lack of consistency on his part due to inability to reason, or was his insight into the reality of things so true and searching that he saw the impossibility of rationalising his varied intuitions? He warns us that "a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds," and is a standard with which "a great soul has simply nothing to do."

[1] *Natural History of Intellect.*

Yet, who was ever more consistent than Emerson in clinging to the revelations of the Spirit, even when the notes he made of those revelations, the hints he gave, failed to combine into any of the conventional formulas of men?

It was not because of any lack of insight, but rather because his insight was more penetrating, that Emerson could write, "This knot of nature is so well tied that nobody was ever cunning enough to find the two ends." But the following quotation from the lecture on Plato[1] shows a yet greater depth of insight into the truth that is past finding out:

> These things we are forced to say, if we must consider the effort of Plato, or of any philosopher, to dispose of Nature, which will not be disposed of. No power of genius has ever yet had the smallest success in explaining existence. The perfect enigma remains.

Again, in his philosophical lectures at Harvard in 1870,[2] Emerson makes his thought still more explicit:

> I cannot myself use that systematic form which is reckoned essential in treating the science of the mind. But if one can say so without arrogance, I might suggest that he who contents himself with dotting a fragmentary curve, recording only what facts he has

[1] *Representative Men.*
[2] *Natural History of Intellect.*

observed, without attempting to arrange them within one outline, follows a system also—a system as grand as any other, though he does not interfere with its vast curves by prematurely forcing them into a circle or ellipse, but only draws that arc which he clearly sees, and waits for a new opportunity, well assured that these observed arcs will consist with each other.

Scattered here and there through the essays there are many paragraphs which show that Emerson very keenly appreciated what an ultimate philosophy must be, though he could not himself carry out the suggestion. "Whenever a true theory appears, it will be its own evidence. Its test is, that it will explain all phenomena."[1] It will also account for evil, for Emerson by no means ignores the darker side of life. He assures us that "no picture of life can have any veracity that does not admit the odious facts." Yet, "a man is a man only as he makes life and nature happier to us."[2] "We must be at the top of our condition to understand anything rightly."[3] "It is true that there is evil and good, night and day; but these are not equal. The day is great and final. The night is for the day, but the day is not for the night."[4]

In reality everything is made of one hidden stuff; all things are moral. Only from a very

[1] *Nature.* [2] *Success.* [3] *Works and Days.* [4] *Success.*

broad point of view can we behold the true significance of things. Sin is really limitation; we have not yet entered into the fulness of life. The truth and beauty of life are even now revealed everywhere before us but, "our eyes are holden that we cannot see things that stare us in the face, until the hour arrives when the mind is ripened." Meanwhile we must read deeply in such essays as *Compensation* and *Spiritual Laws* to learn the meaning of these more darksome stages. At this point one would like to quote the whole of the essay on *Experience*, in which Emerson very clearly expresses the wise man's attitude toward the wonderful stream of life whereof we find ourselves a part.

But it is in *Self-Reliance* that Emerson best combines the individual attitude with the religious spi it of adoration.

> In this pleasing, contrite wood-life which God allows me, let me record day by day my honest thought without prospect or retrospect, and, I cannot doubt, it will be found symmetrical, though I mean it not and see it not. . . . Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it. . . . We first share the life by which things exist, and afterwards see them as appearances in nature, and forget that we shared their cause.

The profound essay entitled *Circles* is, from first to last, an exposition of Emerson's method and contains a number of important warnings:

> Let me remind the reader that I am only an experimenter. Do not set the least value on what I do, or the least discredit on what I do not, as if I pretended to settle anything as true or false. I unsettle all things. No facts are to me sacred; none are profane; I simply experiment, an endless seeker, with no Past at my back. . . . Nothing is secure but life, transition, the energising spirit. . . . No truth is so sublime but it may be trivial to-morrow in the light of new thoughts. People wish to be settled; only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them.

These are the statements of one who saw the magnitude of the philosophic task. He declared life to be "full of surprises" and permanence but "a word of degrees." Therefore he made large reservations for future experience. Around the largest circle a man may draw, the next genius will probably draw a larger. "Our part is to keep aloof from all moorings and afloat." To chronicle the mood of to-day is far greater than to force the lesson of to-day into a system of temperamental devising. Temperament is simply "the iron wire" on which the various moods are strung, and is subject to illusions.[1] Since the greatest wisdom

[1] *Experience.*

in life consists in expressing the mood of the hour the man who is faithful to the present inspiration is likely to have little time for aught else.

The Spirit is progressive. What it makes known to-day is the truth for to-day. Listen while the Spirit speaketh, but know that to-day's truth is but a note in a great symphony. Only man's total history shall show his dignity and worth as an organ of the Spirit. Only the eternal revelation is adequate to make known the real. Unless a man is an "experimenter," with "no Past" at his back, he does not really love Truth, but only its forms and shows. The whole tale has not been told. There may be other types of experience, other revelations yet to be made known. It is too soon to begin to square accounts. Do not, then, cling to forms and standards. Do not be troubled over problems. Avail yourself of the influx of that informing Spirit whose words of wisdom and comfort and cheer, whispered in the silence of the night, in the solitude of nature, or during your "lowly listenings" shall make good the promises of the hope already strong within.

Yet Emerson did not base his conclusions on personal experience alone. He ranged through the literature of the ages and was a wide reader of poetry and philosophy. He was not what is called a scholarly reader in the exact sense. He read what appealed to him. But he knew enough

about all systems to know that none was sufficiently comprehensive to contain all truth; that not all the systems combined had exhausted the "chambers and magazines of the soul."

> Where do we find ourselves? [he asks]. In a series of which we do not know the extremes, and believe that it has none. We wake and find ourselves on a stair; there are stairs below us which we seem to have ascended; there are stairs above us, many a one, which go upward and out of sight. . . . Thus journeys the mighty Ideal before us; it never was known to fall into the rear.[1]

The first essential for all who would follow in the same pathway is fidelity to the spontaneous revelations of the Spirit. We must not only be unhampered by tradition, but remember that as no facts are sacred, "every action admits of being outdone." [2] "Our spontaneous action is always best." We are admonished to trust our instinct to the end, though we can render no reason; for "it is vain to hurry it. By trusting it to the end, it shall ripen into truth, and you shall know why you believe." [3]

Emerson thus gives abundant reasons for his faith. Nothing could be more explicit than the rationale of his method, as unfolded in *Circles* and *Intellect*. When one understands that method,

[1] *Experience.* [2] *Circles.* [3] *Intellect.*

the significance of such sentences as the following is seen: "When I watch that flowing river which, out of regions I see not, pours for a season its streams into me, I see that I am a pensioner; not a cause, but a surprised spectator of this ethereal water." [1] One who has felt the presence of the creative Spirit must rationalise his whole conduct in conformity to the higher law which we are constrained to recognise as the real origin of events. Since it is in our "easy, simple, spontaneous actions that we are strong," we must make a fine art of life, with abundant reservations for the "unexpected."

It is the poet who comes nearest to revealing the great truths of the "stairway of surprise," for the poet more fully yields himself to the vision of the moment, while the philosopher may intrude a sceptical obstacle. Since one can at best but hint at the glories of the transcendental vision, that language is most successful which interposes the least obstacle. It is the "somewhat" which the poet beheld that is the great reality, not his poor report of what he saw, or heard, and felt. We must not, then, mistake the secondary for the primary.

It would be difficult to conceive of a more pronounced empiricism than is contained in the hints which Emerson gives of his highest method, and

[1] *Over-soul.*

the reason he gives why each man should follow the promptings of the Spirit, in his own way, and wherever his instinct leads him. This empiricism is even profounder than that in which one reserves room for possible experiences on some other planet. For wherever one may be, however deeply one may enter into other types of existence, there is always the possibility that the Spirit may speak a profounder message to the soul. The progress of the soul's experiences is measured, not by the richness of its temporal life so much as by its nearness to the Spirit, and this relation pertains to eternity, not to time. It would seem impossible ever to say, The circle is closed. The next moment might belie this statement. To live eternally in ever closer yet in ever varying relation to the Spirit, might at best only be to behold the Spirit as *one* soul can perceive it, never to be "absorbed" or to pass over into any other soul. At any rate, we could never know, until we had tried, what it is to attain a full temperamental vision, and our philosophy of Spirit must be left open until we know far more than we understand now. Better to be for ever inconsistent than to purchase consistency at the cost of other possible revelations of the Spirit.

It is impossible, then, to judge Emerson by the letter. His doctrine is so far empirical that one must have some measure of the same experience

by employment of the same method to appreciate what he means; and if one has felt the experience one cannot put the canons of the letter first. Emerson's method was always to let the inspirations of the Spirit lead the way, instead of inflicting one's hypotheses and presuppositions upon the Spirit. He wanted to know what life was for the Spirit, not what it could be made to be for a certain philosophical demand. The profoundest truth of his life is the great truth of the Gospel expressed in other terms. He succeeded at the same time in putting himself more fully aside than most people and in bringing the Spirit nearer. He is less hampered by the limitations of his age and of the language he uses than are the majority of seers. He is less negative, wiser, more direct, and better poised: hence he is a safer guide to those who would live in the Spirit.

In taking leave of Emerson we must emphasise the fact that his method of adaptation to the progressive revelations of the Spirit involves profound self-knowledge and adjustment to the changing relations of our inner life, which is "full of surprises."

> We do not guess to-day the mood, the pleasure, the power of to-morrow, when we are building up our being. The new position of the advancing man has all the powers of the old, yet has them all new. It

carries in its bosom all the energies of the past, yet is itself an exhalation of the morning. I cast away in this new moment all my hoarded knowledge as vacant and vain. Now, for the first time, seem I to know anything rightly. The simplest words—we do not know what they mean, except when we love and aspire.[1]

Since "God enters by a private door into every individual," our part is to trust the inmost prompting, await further insights when the way is obscure, and, above all, to be ever ready to follow the latest leading. It is only from the external point of view that this seems inconsistent. We must be ready to move forward in order to retain what we have. "God offers to every mind its choice between truth and repose. Take what you please—you can never have both." "Men walk as prophecies of the next age." It is what we would be, what we are ever seeking, that is noblest. "That which is for us" does indeed "gravitate to us," but no prophecy of ours can foretell all that shall come. Therefore remember that even what we call a "law" describes merely what we have thus far noted. There is a "highest law" which no man can formulate. Just because we are more than ourselves in the "ineffable" moments, we should not expect to overtake our insights. Better one word uttered in

[1] *Circles.*

response to that Spirit than a thousand words in the letter.

> Himself from God he could not free;
> He builded better than he knew;
> The conscious stone to beauty grew.

Emerson had no system in the accepted sense of the word. He had a *conviction*, he maintained an ideal attitude, he had a great faith. Thus he was a poet, a religious prophet, rather than a philosopher. As such he occupies a foremost place among those whose insights were too sublime for explication, those whose writings have been the inspiration of thousands of lesser men. One must be an Emerson to know the secret of Emerson. At best one can but hope that one has done justice to his genius where others have misunderstood him.

Yet, if to be a philosopher means to discover a meaning in human life, a value in experience of which most men are oblivious; if to find more in philosophy than any system could contain, then Emerson was a philosopher of philosophers. Above all else, he stood for fidelity to the divine vision, the reality which has been the basis of the greatest systems; whereas many have neglected the reality for the appearance. He stood with open vision in the presence of an order of things which for him was the supreme beauty, goodness.

All else was subordinate to that. Hence all formulations were subordinate. If other men would listen, they, too, would hear the diviner harmonies. Was it not, then, a profound philosophical conclusion which led him to reject all particular systems? Has he not a consistent doctrine in a sense which puts to shame most systems; which proves all men inconsistent who leave out the very heart of life?

If this is true of Emerson's thought, how shallow is that judgment which declares that his life was unsocial, that, in his optimism, he did not take account of the darker facts of life? When a man is able to live on the heights and poetically tell what he there beholds, what have you to say? It is by aspiration for that same reality that men most surely mount out of the darker depths of life. If one who dwells on the heights has less to say on some topics which ordinarily engage the conventionally social man, the blame is not to be cast on the seer. It is rather for those who meet him, and who find him different from other men, to search for the defect in themselves which excludes them from participation in the seer's world.

But if the foregoing contentions be sound, Emerson was not merely a poet of the Over-soul, but the exponent of a complete art of seership. This is, perhaps, the most helpful side of

Emerson's teaching. While, then, Emerson did not himself gather all his results into a reasoned system, the elements are there for those who care to collect and unify them. The first essential is to grasp Emerson's empirical method, begin to live as nearly as you can in your way as he lived in his way. When you have begun to live by the Spirit as he lived you will find the clues about which he has written so persuasively.

Of the great poets and men of genius we usually say, Let them be as they are; not one word would we change, else were they not themselves. And so one would not have Emerson otherwise than Emerson. To criticise him adversely is, generally speaking, to put one's self in an unfavourable light. Yet when it is a question whether or not to adopt Emerson's method in so far as one understands it, other considerations at once arise. To adopt his method might be to imitate the form but not his spirit. Deprived of his poetic genius, one is compelled to add to his method that which, for less gifted men, seems to be needed to complete it. For if we are to adopt his empiricism, we must consider the question, How may we best attain adjustment to the conditions of the advancing spiritual life? What is the proper relation between the receptive and the co-ordinating faculty?

If we are to find the deeper meaning of the

moods which "disbelieve in one another," we must have a method of comparison as well as one of receptivity. Emerson at thirty-five and forty is the ideal of all who would obey when the Spirit speaks. But if Emerson in his last years was incapable of combining his own fragmentary moods into literary synthesis, perhaps we may find in Cabot's statement concerning him—namely, that he felt the need of a regular occupation [1]—a clue to the supplementary method.

To follow this suggestion is not to say that one would have Emerson other than his books reveal him. Had he cared as much for rational processes as the technical philosophers, he would not, let us repeat, have been Emerson. In view of all that he accomplished, hampered by ill-health and adverse circumstances, one could not ask for aught more. Yet Emerson's own empiricism suggests the possibility of its fuller concrete application, the rounding out of the life that would be entirely faithful to the Spirit. Were one to follow the clue of receptivity only, the mind might weaken in the course of time. There are occasions when the more strenuous endeavour teaches most, when it is not well to follow the line of least resistance. Hence it is well to bear in mind Emerson's vigorous individualism; the constructive, combining function by which the soul reacts upon

[1] *See* J. E. Cabot's *Memoir of Emerson.*

its visions and transfuses them with its unifying power.

The corrective of what for some would be a weakening method, if they followed that alone, is perhaps better illustrated by Martineau than by Emerson. Martineau preserved his remarkably keen, precise, systematic, yet saintly thought throughout a productive life of more than ninety years, near the close of which he wrote several great works on ethics and religion. One would like to dwell as near the central Source as Emerson,—write as he wrote at his best; then, having given full and uncritical expression to the higher insights, examine them with the discriminative thought of Martineau, who was not content until he had made every idea transparently clear. Let us first have Emerson's *Over-soul* untampered with. Then let us ferret out pantheism with the almost heartless insistence of Martineau. Let us try to co-ordinate the two methods in our lives that we may co-ordinate our varied moods in a larger synthesis of thought. Philosophy must be an art as well as a science. There must be concrete application of the highest discoveries of the spiritual vision.

If the above suggestion be a sound one, Emerson's empiricism reveals limitations which are not ordinarily recognised in philosophy. The analytical method is not only inadequate, but should

succeed rather than precede other methods. Reason is not the productive faculty, it is that which examines and discovers wisdom's wealth *after* spiritual insight has made that wisdom known. The intellect should not intrude; it must not insist on its formulas, but must be a willing servant, ready to aid the Spirit in its struggles for self-expression. The true method will be receptive, comparative, analytical, and constructive by turns; it will be organic, and the result will be an organic empiricism with one side left "open to the deeps of spiritual nature."

Thus the unity of Emerson's method is expressive of his belief concerning the soul. Beneath the apparent ambiguities in his use of the word "soul" there is a truth which demands just this seeming inconsistency to express its rich content. Sometimes the soul seems to be God; sometimes it is surely one's own prosaic finitude. The prose reveals the multiplicity, the poetry declares the unity. There *is* a God-man mood when there is "no bar or wall between." In that moment one is neither self alone, nor wholly God; but God is over and around the human soul in ineffable union. That is the first great fact. The second is that the soul shall presently declare in varied words and phrases that which it saw, felt, became in a flash. That "each of us is here shows that the soul had need of an organ here" is as great a truth as

the fact of ineffable union. Both the poetry and the prose are needed, and if, in this account, only the prosaic side of Emerson's method has been made explicit, possibly the poetic has been at least dimly suggested.

CHAPTER XII

PHILOSOPHY

FOR several generations it has been customary to despise philosophy, howbeit the history of thought has never been so widely and fruitfully studied as during this same period. Scholars of a certain scientific type constantly speak slurringly of metaphysics as belonging to the age of myth, whereupon they proceed to propound a metaphysic of their own. The unlettered man proudly condemns philosophy as "speculative." Strange to say, even devotees of philosophy are sometimes heard to declare that there is nothing practical in such a study. Again, some who have read a few metaphysical treatises in their college days, and hastily arrived at the superficial conclusion that nothing can be known, continue the remainder of their life to talk as if they knew all about the profoundest science that ever engaged the human mind.

Philosophy is so frequently and thoroughly misunderstood that it is necessary again and again to state the philosophical ideal and point to

the rich achievements of the ages. Philosophy may be, and has often been speculative, but for thousands of years it has been far more than that. It has sometimes led to such scepticism that practical life has been wholly sundered from it. But such instances are warnings by the way; they prove nothing against philosophy. Even Hume, the prince of English sceptics, possessed a constructive ethical faith, and some of his profoundest criticisms of religion point the way to a larger doctrine which may have been in part his own. The fact that he failed to recast his reflections in positive form should not deter one from engaging in the reconstruction of even his most negative results. To stop with Hume, declare that "reason is poor," and philosophy is "the thinnest science," would be like putting out one's eyes and declaring that all the world is dark. Philosophy is in part analytical, and reason often fails to recast its data. But analysis is the merest beginning. Reason is infinitely rich, and philosophy is the *fullest* of the sciences.

If you would know what philosophy is, do not consult the small men in the metaphysical world. Read the great histories of philosophy and read the great men themselves who, from Plato and Aristotle to the days of Renouvier and Royce, have dealt with the facts of life in a large-minded way.

Philosophy is not an artificial scheme of knowledge, a supernatural process of ferreting out life's mysteries. It starts in an every-day, common-sense spirit with facts of nature, evolution, consciousness, and the seer's vision of the divine order, and seeks their ultimate significance. When a hundred men of science have investigated the phenomena of nature and contributed a hundred results, it is the office of philosophy to seek, not necessarily to harmonise but to understand and take account of them. If a hundred seers who claim to be divinely inspired set forth as many different ideas of God, it is the philosopher who penetrates beyond this mere relativity to find the ultimate concept of the divine nature implied in the hundred visions. Scientific men and seers are specialists who do not know their own full meaning. The philosopher must be the profoundest of mortals. His science begins where all other sciences end. Yet, let us repeat, his subject-matter is the experiences of every-day life.

We may therefore define philosophy as a system of knowledge, the ultimate ideal of which is the complete interpretation of experience. All knowledge begins in experience. All knowledge is of experience. The act of knowing is an experience. Anything existing beyond experience would only be so far known as it should conceivably exist in relation to experience. All reflection

begins with the contemplation of experience, and it was experience which men set out to understand. It is easy, however, to forget this, and create artificial thought-worlds which have almost no empirical foundation. It is therefore necessary to remind ourselves of that which ought to be obvious. If philosophers would follow the clues given by experience there wou d be more progress in solving the riddles of the ages. The disrepute into which philosophy has sometimes fallen is largely due to neglect of the empirical method.

Philosophy shows that experience does not at once and fully make its significance known in our consciousness; we are too busily engaged in having the experience to rationalise it. We must scrutinise, examine, compare, seek general principles by which to organise vast collections of empirical data. Starting with presented experience, philosophy passes beyond it to its meaning. Even then it must constantly refer to presented experience as remembered, as just now coming, and as possible. The data of experience are so rich that philosophy must resort to all sorts of devices to adapt itself to the situation. The chief difficulty is that some forget that they are devices, and therefore misunderstand. The usual process is abstraction, and conclusions drawn from abstractions. The logical process is sometimes carried so far that the concrete life of the

Spirit is forgotten. To pursue spiritual ideals alone is to neglect to be rational. To seek only the practical is to fall into certain errors; yet to seek more truth is to forget that philosophy set out to tell men what life really is and how it may be wisely lived. If we are to profit by the lessons of the ages we must steadily avoid all extremes.

The fact that philosophers disagree is sometimes taken to mean that philosophy is largely negative As a matter of fact, there has been a steady development from the physical theory of Thales to the empiricism of Professor James. Sceptical periods have intervened, but reconstructive periods have always followed To know the meaning of the history of philosophy, even the profoundest mind must devote years to the study; while for the majority a lifetime is none too long. Histories of philosophy are valuable aids for a time; but the time comes when the critical study of the great works will alone suffice.

There are many reasons why philosophy is misunderstood. Some are so unfortunate as to begin their study with G. H. Lewes's *History of Philosophy*, a miserably prejudiced piece of work. The author of this one-sided, dogmatic treatise held that the history of philosophy is the record of "the aberrations of the human mind." No philosopher himself, he wrote his two volumes to show that philosophy is impossible. Others have

read a dogmatic treatise, such as Deussen's *Elements of Metaphysics*, which is merely an exposition of one type of philosophy. Still others have read Spencer, or a few other authors who finally dismiss certain problems as insoluble, then drop philosophy as impossible, not knowing that such writers are entirely antiquated. Spencer's word "unknowable" has played an incalculable amount of mischief among those who have deemed it a wisely chosen word. The authority of scientific men like Huxley and Clifford is often taken to be conclusive by those who have never even read a thorough-going history of philosophy.

Again, others know Western philosophy only as it is depreciatively referred to by theosophists, who set up the enormous claim that Greek philosophy was borrowed from the Orient Such claims are based—to use the words of Windelband—upon the "transmutation of analogies into causal relations." To show the inadequacies of such a view, it is only necessary to refer to Mrs. Besant's *Ancient Wisdom*, where Western thought is only treated in so far as it supports the theosophical idea, where dogmatism is substituted for reasoning, and where the scholarship is so inaccurate that the most famous and characteristic saying of Heracleitus is attributed to Anaximander. That Greek philosophy, to be understood, must be studied apart from Oriental or theosophical pre-

dilections every one will admit who really knows anything about the history of the attempt to trace that philosophy to Oriental sources.

The overcoming of prejudice is, then, the starting-point in all philosophy. To understand philosophy is to be thorough; and no one is thorough who is either dogmatic or prejudiced. A becoming modesty has always been a characteristic of philosophers, with a few exceptions.

Another cause for misunderstanding is the sudden and hasty decision at which some people arrive, namely, that nothing can be known concerning reality. Philosophy is supposed to be merely a breeder of doubts: therefore, one is advised to have nothing to do with it. But the faithful student of philosophy knows that negative results are always the most productive; that in the data of agnosticism lu k the essentials of a positive, constructive faith.

And here is where so many fail. They do not study philosophy long enough to understand the method which has been in vogue since the days of Socrates. All other people may be credulous if they will: it is the philosopher's ideal to doubt as long as he can,—even then to wait for new hypotheses to suggest themselves.

Some of the philosophical systems are like a house which is complete except that certain prominent features are rather disproportionate.

The rabble admires such a house, but the architect sees its ugliness. The believing many may admire the philosophical system, but the one man in a million who understands it discovers a defect. He calls attention to this, and superficial minds think the philosopher has failed. But no judgment could be more unfair. It is the true sceptic's place to emphasise the defect, that later thinkers may correct it; for the philosopher must be as keenly alive to error as he is zealous in the pursuit of truth. How far from knowledge of the law of human evolution is that man who declares of any system or of any book, "There are no errors in it: it is infallible." It may be said unqualifiedly, even of the Bible, that no book may be truly understood until its errors are known. Yet it was only a few decades ago that even the possibility of Biblical error was entertained.

The negative method has nearly always been employed in philosophy, hence the enormously rich results of the ages of philosophic thought. But philosophy has come into disrepute with some just on account of its negative dialectic. Everybody has heard of the scholastic disputes concerning the number of angels that can stand on the point of a needle, or the age-long discussion of Nominalism *versus* Realism; and this is what philosophy is supposed to be. But, as Höffding says, "Everything philosophical is instructive";

and even these apparently barren disputations led to valuable results, and scholasticism is far from being synonymous with philosophy. It was scholasticism which furnished "the other fellow" in the argumentative growth of the philosophy of the Renaissance, out of which modern science has sprung. Philosophy always flourishes best when it has an able antagonist. It is not philosophy which is the doctrine to be scorned during those formative ages; it is the crabbed theology which burned Bruno at the stake, compelled Galileo to recant, and made it so difficult for Campanella, Descartes, and their contemporaries to philosophise. No one will ever know how much wisdom the Church thus suppressed.

Not too much philosophy, but not enough,—that is always the trouble. The Church to-day is behind the times largely because it is philosophically immature: the only way to outwit modern scientific agnosticism is to be more fundamental than modern science.

Again, literary writers throw philosophy into discredit by superficial references to certain schools. There are many errors in works on literature and history which refer, in passing, to philosophy. But to know what the Stoics and Epicureans, for example, really were, you must consult a German history of philosophy or read the originals themselves. What history tells

about is too apt to be the degenerate period of Greek philosophy. The best historians of Greece, however, are a noteworthy exception.

Generally speaking, it requires a philosopher to understand a philosopher, as a poet must translate a poet. Barren results there may be in philosophy, tomes and tomes of dry dialectic. But all this ceases to be barren and dry after a time. In philosophy, as in no other department of human knowledge, there is a fitness in time. A book that is unintelligible to-day may be food for the soul a few years hence.

But the chief criticism made by a certain class of minds is that philosophy is impractical. We admit the justice of this criticism, in part; and we have already noted a reason for it, namely, the divorce of philosophy from the concrete. Yet all the doctrines that have been classified as "practical" have played a part in the history of philosophy. There is a wealth of practical wisdom in every genuine philosophy, although the philosopher is usually too busy to give adequate attention to it. The real system-maker probably would not succeed as well if he pursued truth from two motives. The best work in philosophy has always been done when it has been kept up on the high level of metaphysics. When philosophy became largely practical, as among the Stoics, it began to degenerate metaphysically. The ideal philosopher

is he who first founds his system for truth's sake, then enjoys years of leisure, during which he may gradually put his system into practical relations.

We must, therefore, constantly bear in mind that philosophy is systematised knowledge concerning the universe as a whole, a theory of the origin, nature, and destiny of things in all departments, not merely in one domain, of experience. It is concerned with ultimate principles, enduring characteristics, persistent forces, as contrasted with the ephemeral, the transient, or merely apparent. It boldly investigates the illusions of sense, and seeks final truth about life, universal reason, the profoundest significance. It is nothing if not profound; and one begins to be philosophical when one begins to be profound, mature, thorough.

The history of philosophy, therefore, begins with the dawning of manhood in the development of the race, and flourishes only among those nations where reason is the criterion. The ages of myth and superstition are of great interest from other points of view, but possess little value for philosophy, since they are ages of judgment from the appearance, ages of credulity.

In a sense, man's first thoughts about the universe were philosophical; for they were endeavours to find the ultimate causes of things. But philosophy properly begins when man ceases to

regard the universe as the theatre of all kinds of warring, capricious, and miracle-working powers, and looks upon it as a system.

The growth of philosophy proceeds by various stages, as man discovers new aspects in the system of the world. Conspicuous among these epoch-making discoveries are the following:

(1) The discovery of natural law.
(2) The law of evolution.
(3) The finding of self.
(4) The existence of duty.
(5) The discovery of society.

In Greece, philosophy grew out of the life of the people, and became as many-sided and beautiful as their artistic temperaments. "To Greece, then, we turn in order to discover the beginnings of philosophy. By tracing its history, we discover the elements of philosophy as they naturally suggest themselves to the human mind. Only in this way is it possible to understand the multiplicity and profundity of those elements of philosophical thought which to-day constitute our reasoned faith concerning the universe.

Greek philosophy began with a study of the world of nature, and was inspired by observation of the phenomena of change. The mythical deities with which the poets had peopled nature no longer satisfied the demands of thought. The Greek still stood awe-inspired before the marvel-

lous spectacle of the constant mutation which in all ages has called forth the wonder and admiration of men. The deities were not deemed adequate causes of this unceasing flux; for they, too, were creatures of change, and not always harmonious.

It is natural that the ultimate reality of things, the basis of change, should first be described in physical terms; for nature is physical, and man sought natural as opposed to mythological causes. It was not until long afterwards that philosophers began to study mind as a cause,—to make man himself an object of study.

The history of thought from the days of the Ionian physicists to the present is thus a record of the varying points of view which each of us naturally assumes as we pass from the childlike stage of uncritical belief in experience, as given, to that sublime insight in which the soul intuitively beholds the divine order. It is this history which best reveals the errors and snares into which we are likely to fall, as well as the correctives which point the way of escape.

One of these snares is the doctrine that the intellect cannot know ultimate truth, that spiritual things must be spiritually discerned. The latter statement is doubtless true, in its special sphere. But that does not prove that the intellect may not then follow in the footsteps of the Spirit and chronicle the laws of its gracious revelations.

The intuitive person who has beheld the beatific vision receives no sympathy except from those who have also stood on holy ground. It is right to cling to the reality of such experiences despite all scepticism. But when the seer meets an intellectual scholar and finds him impervious to the finer feelings, it by no means follows that "the intellect cannot know spiritual truth." That same scholar may possess truth of equally great value, to which the seer is just as blind. It is as true that intellectual things must be intellectually discerned as that the spiritual must be spiritually seen. It is a false sense of superiority which permits the mere seer to put himself above the scholar. It may be that mere uncritical mysticism is as far from ultimate truth as the unillumined intellect. The truth when we possess it will be found to be a mutual product, not a private possession. What the seers should say is that the intellect alone cannot know the whole truth. It is equally true that seership alone has no safeguard against error.

The statement is frequently made that "the intellect always leads to an abyss,"—that at best it ends in a paradox, an inconsistency. But an intellectual abyss is simply a gap in our knowledge which future thought may fill. It is far too early to lay down the law and state that this will "always" be the case. A paradox is an imperfect

statement of a truth which is thus far too large to put in consistent form. An inconsistency is a temporary halting-point. It is cowardly to declare that we cannot resolve the paradoxes and inconsistencies.

If it be a question of consistency, surely the mystic cannot cast the first stone. The substitute which he offers for the paradoxes of the intellect is usually far more inconsistent than the doctrine which he condemns. For, having concluded that the intellect cannot know truth, before he has yet mastered the profundities of intellectual knowledge, he neglects to be consistent even where it is already possible.

Note how absurd is the statement which discredits the intellect. What is this condemnatory conclusion if not intellectual? How did any one ever arrive at the conclusion that the intellect cannot give us truth except by a process of judgment based on certain evidence? What statement was ever made that was not intellectual?

What is the intellect ? It is the mental power whereby we represent things, experiences, that is, objects in general, by means of ideas viewed in certain relations. To see the connection between ideas, apprehend their law, and pass to new results or conclusions is to reason. Reason deals with the data which experience has presented, and which it discovers by study of the presented

data. In a word, it is the interpretation of the given.

But what more can you say of your mystical experience than that it is "given"? That is, the real thing is immediate, felt. The moment you undertake to describe your experience, you pass from the realm of the immediate to the intellectual domain. Every idea is intellectual. The utmost that any mystic ever really sought to make clear, whatever the illusions under which he laboured, was to convey clear intellectual ideas.

Whether we know it or not, all our feelings are bound up with interpretations of those feelings. No one is more theoretical than the mystic. We cannot sunder the spiritual from the intellectual consciousness. It is an imperfect psychology which seems to justify such separation. Furthermore, no experience as given is adequate by itself; and the moment comparison is introduced the intellect is employed. The fact that intuition is immediate does not mean that it is wholly new and independent. There is no intuition which immediately and fully tells us what reality is, or even what the self is, what the world is. Our knowledge is largely interpretative; it is based on years of careful comparison of illusory and conflicting experiences.

Nor is any man, whatever his claims, led or even convinced by feeling or seership alone. We

are sometimes won over by feeling, sometimes by reason. The feeling may be contrary to reason, and the reason in conflict with feeling. It is only after long experience that we see the true unity of intuition and reason. To grasp this unity we must both feel the Spirit and know the law. This is the knowledge which gives true power. Only when we thus know can we be calm when all appearances indicate a storm. "The intellect builds the world," says Emerson, "and is the key to all it contains." The divine order is the divine reason, and reason in man must understand that order.

No one who has read deeply in Plato is ever likely to subordinate reason. Without exception, it may be said that those who depreciate the power and place of reason betray their own intellectual deficiencies. As matter of fact, the entire misunderstanding is due to the oversight of a certain fundamental distinction, that is, the connection between feeling and thought, primary and secondary experience. All experience is primarily an affair of sentiency, that is, it is immediately given. To exist is to feel, to come into contact with sensations of touch, sight, sound, and the rest; the feeling of resistance, the sense of pleasure and pain. But, in another sense, to exist is to think. That is, man not only feels pleasure and pain, and other sensations, but he is eager to

describe and communicate his feelings. Accordingly, he recasts feeling in terms of thought. Feeling is direct, thought is indirect. There is first sensation, then the thought which interprets it and makes a perception of it. Perception in turn becomes conception, and conception leads the way to all kinds of theory and speculation.

Now, no one who grasps the subject will deny that it is sentiency which immediately acquaints us with reality. In a profound sense reality is feeling, and feeling can never be deprived of its importance. But who is content simply to feel? Who is there that possesses feeling even in the simplest form, apart from all intellectual interpretation of it? When the last word has been said in favour of feeling, the question arises, Is feeling adequate? Does it reveal its own principle of organisation, the standard by which to rid it of illusion? Clearly it does not. Hence, reason, although it does not create its subject-matter, and is, strictly speaking, only an interpreter of immediate experience in all its forms, is in a sense the most important function in man.

It may still be true that allowance must be made for immediacy as somehow real in a way known only to the one who feels it. The seer is doubtless justified in saying that to know what the spiritual vision is you must behold it. The musician may still say, rightly, that music has a

domain of its own. No philosopher would begrudge the poet his world of the imagination. But when all the poets and prophets have won every point for which they contend and freely set forth their visions in symbolical forms, there is still room for the philosopher in the highest realm of all. For the philosopher comes last and surveys the whole field, compares the visions, studies the symbols, puts together the fragments. In the last analysis he finds that large allowance must be made for immediacy and for individuality. Yet in a sense the interpretation of the sublimest vision of the mystic is no more difficult than the rationalisation of the commonest feeling. The general principles are the same. The mystical experience, if true, presents nothing which you and I cannot verify. Every feeling, all experience is a miracle. It must be accepted as a fact, a gift of our precious life in this wonderful universe. But granted the feeling, we are then able to take a step farther and lift it to the plane of reason.

The most critically rational philosophy must be a confession that reality is first felt before it is thought about, that what it aims to interpret is just that immediate experience which every one may turn to and verify as real. But it is reason that shows what is real in the domain of feeling. If feeling is real, thought is real too. If we are to know what is ultimately real we must take

account of both feeling and thought. For just as reason reacts upon feeling and shows that feeling is unable to account for itself, so feeling in turn criticises thought and declares it to be inadequate. Both feeling and thought are ultimate elements of our experience. No analysis can resolve the one absolutely into the other. Our philosophy must be broad enough to include the uniqueness of feeling and the creative power of thought. Philosophy is both descriptive and suggestive, both interpretative and poetical. No philosophy is ultimately satisfactory which is untrue to spiritual immediacy. Yet no philosophy is universal which is not, through and through, the product of reconstructive reason.

CHAPTER XIII

BERKELEY'S IDEALISM

NO error is more common in popular philosophy than the misinterpretation of idealism. This term is very readily understood when applied to practical or religious ideals. But, philosophically, it is supposed to mean a vague, airy theory, entirely divorced from common sense. In fact, it is taken to mean the denial of the existence of nature. Accordingly, it is supposed to be an easy refutation of the theory to strike a table or a post, and thereby prove that matter exists.

This erroneous interpretation has largely arisen out of the misunderstanding of Berkeley. Doctrines which denied the existence of matter have indeed been current. Berkeley has been quoted in substantiation of these beliefs, and thus the erroneous ideas have spread. But Berkeley held no such view. He foresaw and repudiated such an interpretation. Let us, then, without undertaking a minute study of Berkeley's system, examine his idealism with a view to removing this misunderstanding from the noblest theory of nature that has ever been held.

The philosophy of this great thinker, widely esteemed as one of the sanest and profoundest reasoners who ever lived, must first of all be understood in the light of philosophical history. When Berkeley published his volumes, the theory of evolution and the conception of nature as a living thing, had not yet been promulgated. Born in 1684, Berkeley came immediately after an epoch in which nature had come to be regarded as a hard-and-fast mechanism, described and interpreted in terms of mathematics, necessity, rigidly exact causation. If studied at all in connection with consciousness, matter was commonly regarded as sharply contrasted with mind. In fact, it was in this period that the modern doctrine of the parallelism of mind and matter began to take shape. Descartes had declared that mind and body are "wholly distinct,"[1] and that the body obeys mechanical laws independently of the world of consciousness. Spinoza went farther and declared that there is complete, universal parallelism between thought and extension, so that the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things. But he held that there is absolutely no causal connection between mind and body.[2] Then, in due course, came Locke, with his theory that all our knowledge arises from sensation and reflection. Locke held that the

[1] *Discourse on Method*, Part IV. [2] *Ethics*, Part II.

primary qualities of things, that is, solidity, extension, figure, motion, and the rest, exist in the world about us, apart from all perception. The secondary qualities, such as colour, taste, light, heat, cold, pleasure, and pain, he traced to our own perceptions.[1] But there must then be a substratum of some sort as the basis of the primary qualities and the motions which are copied or represented in human consciousness. What this independent substratum was, Locke was unable to say. At best it was a sort of abstraction for purposes of thought. In general, our ideas were supposed to conform to material conditions, though Locke did not decide in favour of materialism, or any other definite theory.

The philosophy of Berkeley was a vigorous reaction from many of the doctrines of his predecessors, particularly the theory of Locke in regard to substance. Berkeley regarded this unknown material substratum as a figment of the mind. He saw no reason why we should attribute to an unknown somewhat the qualities and relations which we perceive. He knew nothing of a mechanical system of nature operating apart from, and entirely unlike, the mind. He did not conceive of two sets of events, the one exclusively mental, the other entirely physical, moving along independently of each other. Nor did he have

[1] *Essay*, Bk. II., ix.

anything to say about a rigidly mechanical "substance." From his point of view there is but one substance, namely, Spirit, one source of power, one real cause. Why, then, should thought take this roundabout course and conjure up unknown entities? Why should it create chasms between that which is known in one experience? Why not regard the experience which we call "nature" as an immediate product of God, a direct gift from Spirit to consciousness, and thus do away with the dualism of matter and spirit?

When we look within to discover the nature of experience, what we find is a mind thinking, or, rather, we discover that there is a steady flow of thoughts, and from their presence we learn that there is a perceiver of them. Some of these mental states reveal a certain regularity, others clearly come within the province of our will. Everybody can make these simple discoveries, and careful thinking will show that they are very profound. There is no surer evidence of their truth than the verification which each man may make for himself. Berkeley appeals to his readers to make these empirical tests. In setting forth his theory of matter he maintained that he was expounding no more than any thoughtful person would accept as common sense. For every one is primarily aware of ideas, and it is just these familiar objects of consciousness which constitute the entire store

of our experience. Fundamentally, as well as superficially, our life is a life of mind, and we are unable to describe or conceive of the simplest or the greatest experience in any other than mental terms. Life *is* mental, is not alone describable as mental. Reality is actually present to the mind; it is not distantly "represented" or copied in our consciousness. What you mean when you say there is a tree yonder is that you have certain perceptions of distance, size, colour, and the like. There is no more reason to single out certain qualities and declare that they belong to the "object in itself" than to pick out the aches and pains we feel and attribute them to things-in-themselves. By a very profound and careful analysis Berkeley showed in one of his earliest books that even the perception of distance is acquired by gradual perceptual experience. A man born blind and suddenly restored to sight would have no idea of distance. He might acquire such an idea and learn to govern his actions accordingly. But all our acquirements are developments of and within our experience, which is always mental.

This, then, is Berkeley's position. Sensations are ideas in our minds. They present various relations which we are able progressively to understand. But we have no ground for the assumption that what we perceive and declare to be "outside" of us is something unlike our ideas.

There are not two tables, the one of oak, entirely unlike our perceptions of the table as hard, extended, and of a certain colour; and the other, a mental representation of the material table. The table of our perception *is* the real table. We know the table as a group of ideas, immediately present in consciousness, and, however differently an omniscient Mind might know that table, it would still be akin to the act of knowledge, not an independent "material" table.

In his earliest writing, the *Commonplace Book*, in which Berkeley experimentally put down his thoughts on this subject, wondering how he should present them to the critical world, he explicitly states that to exist is to be perceived or to perceive. There is no reason to suppose the existence of a world apart from all percipient beings. We have no experience of any such world, nor are we called upon to postulate its existence in order to account for this world. The supposition of the reality of matter as something existing beyond experience of the only kind we know, is one of those abstractions which have for ages hampered human thought. Such abstractions are mere generalities. When we analyse experience to see what it means, we find that it does not consist of generalities, but of concrete particulars; and the only particulars with which we are acquainted are ideas—our notions

of the self with its thoughts and activities. To account for these, our real experiences, what we need is not an independently existing "matter," but the intelligence and mind of God. The regular sequence of the constant manifestation of God —that is the true basis of the wonderful order of our experience. All power, life, causality, comes directly from Him. All percipient beings are immediately and continuously related to Him. Nature, law, change, have neither existence nor significance apart from His omnipresent life. Nor have we any existence that is wholly separate from His will and rational providence, His life and wisdom. And the type of our life with God we already know, namely, the life of ideas.

Even if there be no unthinking substance existing apart from our minds, some might suppose that another sort of independent existence might lie beyond consciousness. But Berkeley also disposes of this view:

> Say you, there might be a thinking Substance—something unknown—which perceives, and supports, and ties together the ideas. Say I, make it appear there is any need of it and you shall have it from me. I care not to take away anything I can see the least reason to think should exist.[1]

Thus economically logical is the clear-thinking Berkeley.

[1] *Works*, Fraser's Ed., i., 33.

No one who should pause to think about it would maintain that we know of the existence of things apart from sensation. Berkeley declares that there can be no sensation without something to possess it. Likewise there can be no thought in a thoughtless thing.[1] What we find in our experience is sensations and thought. The sensations come from without, the thoughts from within. Since existence must have a basis, and since we are logically bound to attribute existence (known as perception) to that which is like it,

> it is evident that sensible things cannot exist otherwise than in a mind or spirit. Whence I conclude [says Berkeley], not that they have no real existence distinct from being perceived by me, but that *there must be some other Mind wherein they exist.* As sure, therefore, as the sensible world really exists, so sure is there an infinite, omnipresent Spirit who contains and supports all.[2]

Berkeley does not, then, say that our sensations arise from our own minds simply. When I leave my study, my desk is still existent there; for its ultimate elements had no merely human origin. By "existence" I am to understand *capability of being perceived.* If a spirit were present in my study, the spirit would see my desk; that is, certain relations would be impressed on the spirit's

[1] *Works*, i., 89. [2] *Ibid.*, i., 424.

consciousness in regular order, which he would understand. A very simple sensation may suggest a wealth of other sensations to the mind. If, for example, I stand before the Jungfrau, looking up at the ice-clad height from the hot valley, various ideas are brought before my mind which suggest what I might feel were I present on the Jungfrau. But I am not to suppose that these sensations which I might feel are intelligible apart from a mind feeling them. I think of them only because I have previously felt or heard of such sensations. In the same way I distinguish the difference in space between my position and the summit of the mountain because previous experience has taught or given me the idea of externality.

Berkeley's point of view is precisely the one which any reasoning person would hold who should discover the great and fundamental truth that all we know is states of consciousness, and that, since these facts of consciousness are in large part involuntarily given and systematically perceived, they must have a ground or origin apart from our own whims, caprices, and volitions.

Let us hear further from Berkeley himself in confirmation of the above:

> The table I write on I say exists, that is, I see and feel it; and if I were out of my study I should say it

existed—meaning, thereby, that if I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it.[1] . . . By the principles premised we are not deprived of any one thing in nature. Whatever we see, feel, hear, or any wise conceive or understand, remains as secure as ever, and is as real as ever. There is a *rerum natura*, and the distinction between realities and chimeras retains its full force. . . . I do not argue against the existence of any one thing that we can apprehend either by sense or reflection. That the things I see with my eyes and touch with my hands do exist, really exist, I make not the least question. . . . If any man thinks this detracts from the reality of things, he is very far from understanding what hath been premised in the plainest terms I could think of. . . . In the sense here given of *reality*, it is evident that every vegetable, star, mineral, and in general each part of the mundane system, is as much a *real being* by our principles as by any other. Whether others mean anything different by the term *reality* from what I do, I entreat them to look into their own thoughts and see.[2]

If we follow the light of reason, we shall, from the constant, uniform method of our sensations, collect the goodness and wisdom of the Spirit who excites them in our minds; but this is all that I can see reasonably concluded from thence. To me, I say, it is evident that the being of a Spirit infinitely wise, good, and powerful is abundantly sufficient to explain all the

[1] *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, § 3. [2] *Ibid.*, §§ 34–36.

appearances of nature. But as for *inert, senseless Matter*, nothing that I perceive has any the least connection with it, or leads to the thoughts of it.[1] . . . The term *thing*, in contradistinction to idea, is generally supposed to denote somewhat existing without the mind. . . . Since, therefore, the objects of sense exist only in the mind, and are withal thought less and inactive, I chose to mark them by the word *idea*, which implies those properties. . . . That what I see, hear, and feel, doth exist,—that is to say, is perceived by me—I no more doubt than I do of my own being.[2]

There is not any other substance than spirit, or that which perceives. . . . A spirit is one simple, undivided, active being—as it *perceives* ideas, it is called *Understanding*, and, as it *produces*, it is called the *Will*.[3]

Berkeley shows that the entire difficulty has arisen from the supposition of a twofold existence of the objects of sense: namely (1), intelligible, or in the mind; and (2) real, or without the mind. Berkeley traces the reality directly to Spirit, and thus completely undermines not only the basis of dualism, but of scepticism. For the root of scepticism is this:

So long as men thought that real things subsisted without the mind, and that their knowledge was only

[1] *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, § 72. [2] *Ibid.* §§ 39, 40. [3] *Ibid.* § 27.

so far forth *real* as it was *conformable to real things*, it follows they could not be certain that they had any real knowledge at all.[1]

In Berkeley's idealism there is no such separation between noumena and phenomena. Our minds lie open to the being of God. We become aware of His existence by observing the developments of our conscious experience. We learn our existence by noting what we do as perceiving, thinking, volitional beings; and we know, through reason, that there are other finite spirits. Thus the world is through and through a spiritual experience; we are all closely united in the life of God; the true world is the world of ideas, and we need no longer fear the encroachments of atheism, materialism, or philosophic doubt, since these have been proved to be utterly baseless and irrational.

As if to make assurance doubly sure, Berkeley sets forth his theory in the form of three dialogues in which "Hylas," who represents the ordinary unthinking view regarding matter, contends point by point for the independent existence of matter. "Philonous," his opponent, represents Berkeley's great insight, and steadily exposes the errors of the popular view until, finally, Hylas is compelled to acknowledge his defeat as follows:

I must needs own, Philonous, nothing seems to

[1] *Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*, § 86.

have kept me from agreeing with you more than somehow *mistaking the question*. In denying Matter, at first glimpse I am tempted to imagine you deny the things we see and feel: but, upon reflection, find there is no ground for it. What think you, therefore, of retaining the name *Matter*, and applying it to *sensible things*. This may be done without any change in your sentiments. . . . I freely own there is no other substance, in a strict sense, than *Spirit*. But I have been so long accustomed to the term *Matter* that I know not how to part with it. To say there is no *Matter* in the world is still shocking to me. . . . If by *Matter* is meant some sensible thing, whose existence consists in being perceived, then there is *Matter*. This distinction gives it quite another turn; and men will come into your notions with small difficulty. . . . I have been a long time distrusting my senses; methought I saw things by a dim light, and through false glasses. Now the glasses are removed, and a new light breaks in upon my understanding. I am clearly convinced that I see things in their native forms, and am no longer in pain about their *unknown natures* or *absolute existence*.

The misunderstanding at last removed, one is prepared to follow Berkeley intelligently when he characterises the world of nature as a "divine visual language." He rejects the mechanical theory because it explains nothing, and simply tabulates laws, and sets forth the general rules and method of motion. Berkeley does not doubt the

principles and theorems of the sciences. He believes as profoundly as the most precise physicist in the regular course of nature, but is not satisfied with any theory which fails to account for the real causal efficiency in things:

> We cannot [he says] make even one step in accounting for the phenomena, without admitting the immediate presence and immediate action of an incorporeal Agent, who connects, moves, and disposes all things according to such rules, and for such purposes, as seem good to Him.[1] . . . We know a thing when we understand it, and we understand it when we can interpret or tell what it signifies. Strictly the Sense knows nothing. We perceive, indeed, sounds by hearing and characters by sight. But we are not therefore said to understand them. . . . Instruments, occasions, and signs occur in, or rather make up, the whole visible Course of Nature. These, being no agents themselves, are under the direction of One Agent, concerting all for one end, the supreme good. . . . Sense and Experience acquaint us with the course and analogy of appearance or *natural effects*. Thought, Reason, Intellect introduce us into the knowledge of their *causes*.[2]

Berkeley is careful to discriminate between pantheistic systems and his own conception of the omnipresent Spirit.

[1] *Siris*, § 237. [2] *Ibid.*, §§ 253, 258, 264.

> Comprehending God and the creatures in one general notion [he says, in his most mature work [1]], we may say that all things together make one universe, or τὸ πᾶν. But if we should say that all things make one God—this would be an erroneous notion of God.

Berkeley's system is not, then, mystical, but is a clear-cut theory of the relationships of finite spirits and the Supreme Spirit, an inspiring theory of the divine order. One should therefore avoid attributing to him any of the obscure doctrines which now pass current. Berkeley was careful to distinguish between human whims and desires on the one hand, and the law, order, system of "the divine visual language" on the other. He was very far from attributing the qualities of sense to human thought. It would not be correct to conclude from his premises that "all is mind," as that expression is now used. Berkeley's idealism is an idealism of the Spirit, not an idealism of egoistic, affirmative thought. He did not counsel men to build their own world from within. Nor did he try to devise a fine-spun metaphysic of the romantic type. He neither stated, nor did he believe, that the world of nature is an "illusion" or "delusion." The world for him was not due to a "fall," nor did it spring from "Maya." It would have seemed the most absurd nonsense to

[1] *Siris.*

him to declare that this fair world of ours sprang from ignorance. He neither denied distinctions nor blurred differences. He took the marvellously beautiful divine order as he found it and sought to interpret it. To him the divine order was a "City of God," a relationship of finite spirits and the father Spirit. His system was essentially pluralistic, rather than monistic, a clearly conceived spiritual idealism. Accordingly, our final word must be: Understand Berkeley philosophically if you would really know him.

CHAPTER XIV

THE ETERNAL ORDER

NO comment on the world at large is more frequently heard than the statement that it is a realm of illusions. We hear about the illusions of the senses, the illusions of pleasure, hope, and fancy; we are told that existence holds much that is a deceit and a snare. The pleasures of wealth are fleeting, society is hollow and superficial, human beings are unstable, friendships are fickle, and marriage is a lottery. Thus warnings greet our ears on every hand. Even love is included in the general condemnation, and a man is fortunate if he can retain any portion of his faith in humanity and life. For such thoughts about the world quickly lead to pessimism, and pessimism leads as easily into agnosticism.

There is a still more disheartening condemnation of the world, a point of view which apparently has even more evidence in its favour than this popular pessimism. Possibly this world is not only a deceit, so this deeper scepticism says, but the whole of life may be a dream. No

characteristic of metaphysical treatises is more benumbing than the constant use of terms which imply this most profound doubt. The words "appearance," "illusion," "seems," and "seeming" haunt nearly every page. Nothing is, but only "seems" to be real. There is only seeming evolution, seeming individuality, seeming freedom. The mind is fed upon these husks until it is almost in despair of real food. Nothing is, but only appears to be. The mind seems to study metaphysics and appears to contemplate somewhat. But no: it is only a scheme of shadows depending upon shadows, and these only appear to be cast. The thought naturally follows that the entire world may only be a "seeming" world, a shadow, which the sun of another sphere shall dispel. The illusions of our every-day life may be only the foreground of our dream; the real illusion may be that we exist at all as we seem now to live.

Now, no one contends that the doubt that life is real is groundless. Our acquaintance with illusion is too frequent to permit the belief that there are no illusions. It is no mere figure of speech which compares our life to a dream. We are possessed by the belief that this life is not all. We are assured that the present existence is only the lowest round in a series of spiritual experiences (not incarnations). In this life we are beginning to know that we are spiritual beings; we are open-

ing our spiritual eyes and contemplating the first visions from "on high." Sometime we shall be changed; somewhere we shall pursue a different kind of career. No one can persuade us either that death ends all, or that progress ceases with the great awakening. It is well constantly to call attention to this profound conviction.

One of the commonest experiences in human life is the discovery that things are not what they seem. Far back in infancy, man awakened to this fact when he fruitlessly reached for a distant object apparently spread before him on a tangible plane. Throughout life illusion after illusion is dispelled. Each new type of experience is accompanied by fresh illusions, and the more complex and lofty the experience the more expert must the participant become.

In no domain are the deceptions more alluring than in the realm of feeling. In fact, it is here that the real contest with illusion begins. It is commonplace to state that the affections must be subjected to various tests, such as comparison, time, distance, the experiences of others, and the criteria of reason. It may be stated as a general axiom that no feeling is either an intelligible or a safe guide by itself, that is, as given. Let us repeat that, although our acquaintance with reality begins with feeling, that is, immediacy in some form, yet what we understand by reality is not

the presented feeling, but what examination has shown feeling to be.

The infant tries to grasp the moon and fails. The same little ambitious hand is stretched forth to seize a plaything and is successful. Finally, by repeated comparison, the child understands what space signifies. The affectional experience likewise becomes intelligible by repeated contrast. It is not a mass of feeling, but knowledge, acquaintance with the world, which shows us how to discern the realities of feeling. Not the one who has had the greatest amount of feeling-experience, but the one who has thought most about his experience is the true guide. We quote sentiments and intuitions as authorities, as if we were able to feel the reality of life at first hand. But profounder analysis reveals the fact that comparison of experiences, the application of rational tests, really plays a greater part in our adjustment to the world than any other phase of our mental life.

Yet every true lover of wisdom must protest against that form of philosophy which seeks to erect a system on the negative conclusions drawn from this great conviction. All who are acquainted with the religio-philosophical systems of India know that the characterisation of our present life as illusory leads to the profoundest kind of pessimism; for a sort of despair follows the

discovery that this life is hid behind a veil. There is a vain attempt to account for the dream: it could not have sprung from "Brahman,"—the "One without a second,"—therefore it must have originated in our ignorance. But ignorance is itself an illusion; we are not the individuals we seem to be. It is only the desire to live which apparently produces what seems to be a world. The only escape is by freedom from it all in the "Absolute." Consequently there is a recoil from natural existence, a recoil which inevitably leads to the condemnation of everything external; and finally points to the ascetic or hermit life as the only way of escape from the burdens of sense-perception.

Of course, we in the Western world will not carry this doctrine to such excess, yet the seeds of this theory have been sown here, and some of these same conclusions follow from the statements of popular metaphysical reasoners. It is important to note that there is a fatal flaw in reasoning when this conclusion follows. The grandeur and beauty of temporal life are lost sight of, and the future is meditated upon as if that alone were good. But the future seems not half so attractive when viewed as a sort of soothing, conciliatory world, where one is treated sweetly because life here was so bitter. True philosophy faces just this world of alleged illusion, distinguishes between the

appearances of things and their reality. Admitting that things are not wholly what they seem, it persistently searches for the sources of illusion, that it may eliminate these and know the real from the apparent. It classifies that judgment as superficial which condemns the whole world, because, forsooth, certain of its phenomena have been found deceptive. To describe a thing as an "illusion," an "appearance," or "shadow," is not to account for it, but simply to give it a new name. Philosophy seeks to *explain*, not to name, and the presupposition is that everything that exists not only has a reason for being, but an intelligible basis of existence. The hollowest and shallowest illusion must be an illusion *of* something: every shadow is cast *by* something. Let us, then, probe it to its foundation, not be content with the dull generalisation that "our senses deceive us," or that we are but dreamers of a dream.

To say that a thing "seems" to be is ever a popular way of dismissing that which is misunderstood. This is not half so honest as to call the whole universe an "x." Apparently it is a profound generalisation, one which dazzles the mind of the one who gives it forth; and it awes the listener who hears it—if he knows nothing about philosophy. The word "seeming" is even applied to our moral sense—for is not morality transcended when the veil is cast aside?—and God

alone is spared, though logically He ought merely to seem to exist, as the apparent basis of that which seems to appear.

In contrast with this pseudo-philosophy I venture to assert that everything is in some sense real. If we could know any one of these much-scorned appearances in all its relations, we should understand the perfect whole of the universe. This is very far from saying that we have merely to open our eyes to behold what nature is; it is simply an argument for the reality of nature in some sense of the word. What that grade of reality is can only be seen in so far as we dismiss the confusing notion that nature is unreal.

Even if our present life be largely a dream-life, there must be: (1) a basis for our dreams; (2) a reason for our dreaming; (3) a significance in our dreams; (4) a reality in the self that dreams. All this is obviously related to reality. It is impossible to conceive of anything so fancifully absurd that it is out of relation to reality. For the merest fancy is in some way psychologically derived from experience. The whole task of philosophy is the adjustment of appearances in relation to reality. Whatever appears is, therefore, in some sense real. What appears in some measure qualifies reality. There is no "mere appearance"; there are no unrelated dreams. The fact that we only partly see things as they are does not

prove that they do not exist. However deeply immersed in illusions we may be, our present life is as real in its way as any life could be. There is a reality in the storm as well as in the calm spot. Nature does not merely "appear" to surround me, it is really existent there. I may sometime view it differently, but it will still exist in some form. I do not simply seem to be separate from my fellows; I really possess a markedly distinct life or individuality of my own. I do not possess apparent freedom,—I really am free; otherwise, the moral order would have no meaning.

It is not true that I merely seem to exist,—I do exist. The fact of my existence withstands the most sceptical doubts ever propounded by the mind of man. I am more sure of my existence than of anything else. Nothing is more truly a test of reality than my present moment of consciousness. If anything be illusory, therefore, it is the unrelated "Absolute" or theoretical "Being" who is too abstract to bear the burden of the world.

The chief point is that everything is real, although its full character may be only progressively perceived. Let us dispense with these vague references to illusions. Let us recollect that the illusion is only that of inadequate understanding. My senses are not false to me. They really convey knowledge of reality. If I am partly deceived by sensations, it is my erroneous thought

about them which must be corrected. There is every reason why I should persist in the endeavour to learn what nature really is. To postpone the hope of knowing reality to some future state would be like postponing service, putting off love, denying heaven. The modern man believes that service must begin here, that love is for to-day, that heaven is where there is peace and harmony. By the same reasoning, life may be as real and as earnest now as at any time, in any place, or under any condition.

God is present in every thought, in every feeling. That is the prime fact, and that fact refutes all the abstract metaphysics ever proposed. You will never find God until you find Him in just this passing moment of consciousness, in the storms and stress of present existence. Having found Him in the concrete, build your entire philosophy from that. If you find yourself using abstract terms, cross them out and substitute concrete terminology. *The abstract is what remains when we have tried to think God out of everything.*

One need not go into a trance to find reality. It needs no supernatural revelation to make God known. Reality lives; it does not apparently seem to live. Reality is here; it does not somehow appear to be here. Everything that exists is a part of the divine order; our dreams, our visions, our sorrows, joys, and aspirations. God resides in

the minute as well as in the grand and in the enormous. He is a being of infinitely diversified character, not an abstract "Absolute."

The future spiritual life in which we are to be more free, wherein we shall behold the world, as it were, "face to face," will probably be like a high school, which we cannot appreciate till we have graduated from the grammar school. That richer field of education will call out more from the soul. We shall undoubtedly possess greater powers and correct many erroneous conclusions. Higher types of experience will reveal higher standards of reality. There will doubtless be a gradual transition into a richer life. But it by no means follows that the present life is unreal or lacking in value. Nor is the future life sundered from the present. The world of consciousness is immediately related both to the present world of nature and to the unseen world of the immortal life. This world of time and space would be nothing without eternity as its ground. The soul dwells in eternity now, it has never dwelt apart from it, and never will be separate. To pass from the flesh life to the excarnate is simply—for the soul—to drop an outer garment, however the change may seem to the earthly observer. The soul has less to obstruct it; it has not "entered eternity." Nor is it transformed into an "immortal spirit"; it is that now. Life is continuous, for

life is one; the life of the soul is not the life of the flesh.

Man was born in ignorance of the fact that he is a spiritual being living in eternity, and thus he is able to enjoy the benefits of individual and social experience. Every stage in his progress is fraught with value. When he mistakes his body for himself, he is beginning to advance. There is a value in that experience which no other experience could bring out as well. It is real as far as it goes. When he discovers his mind and speculates about that, man enters into new illusions, but he is much nearer the truth. What was true on the lower plane is true here also, but in a modified, enlarged sense. When he passes to the next stage man simply adds the greater truth that he is a soul; therefore he regards mind and body in a different light. Likewise with the transition beyond death: more truth is added, but still the same soul.

Philosophically, nature is what one thinker has called the "organic bond of individuals," that which unites us all. Nature is known through the activities of God on the soul; and to draw nearer to nature is to draw nearer to God. Nature is real in the life or experience of God and in the spiritual life of man. The discovery of its spiritual meaning makes it in no sense less real. To argue that we do not know nature "in itself," apart from

mind, is to contend for one of the old-time abstractions; for who wants to know nature "in itself," that is, apart from the conditions of knowing nature? There is no "nature-in-itself"; nature has no existence apart from God—that is the great truth of philosophical idealism, not that it has no existence "apart from mind," as those affirm who misunderstand Berkeley and other idealists.[1]

The positive statement is that, through our cognitive organism we know the world of God's natural life. Our powers of knowledge are precisely the means without which we could not attain the end; God is not thwarted: He is able to develop in us what He obviously set out to develop, namely, consciousness of His natural life. It rests with us to remove all subjective and speculative obstacles, that we may know even as He would have us know. When at last all abstract barriers are removed, and we look out on the fresh green fields or the newly fallen snow, we realise what a burden has passed from man since the old days when man thought he was serving God by mortifying the flesh, or spending all his time preparing for the world to come. It is like being born anew; we rejoice for the race, that now at last man can enjoy his natural life. And how

[1] See Chapter XIX. for a more explicit statement of the idealistic philosophy of the present volume.

strange it seems that man should have regarded any part of the beautiful body which God has given him as evil! How strange, too, to talk so much about sin, as if God were so weak that He could not make a decent man! What a vast network of illusions man has woven to keep himself from knowledge of life as it truly is!

How inspiring the thought that we live in an eternal present, that the Father is here now in His fulness, that every bit of nature, every thought is a channel to the divine! We may really pause in peace, take time to rest and look about us at this glad world. For why need we hasten? What is there elsewhere which cannot begin now? Why did we hurry except through some mistaken idea as absurd as the ascetic's belief? Peace! Peace! Let us be still and enjoy this present moment. The only way that time is real is in the moment that is with us. A future eternity would be like a river with only one end, or a sort of ethereal vacuum. Every one of these great ideas must be brought down into the living present where God is. We must become at once enveloped in the present, yet superior to it. We must look at nature with closer gaze than ever before, yet see nature as it truly is in the life of God. Do you realise what a great possibility this is, what a help in daily life?

Pause again to grasp this great idea—in eternity!

The soul is united with the Life which has existed through all time. Each moment, each feeling, each thought, is embosomed in this great continuous whole; there is no break, there is no cessation or interruption. Each and every one of these "seeming" things which we have been freeing from its artificial shadows is a clue to this great oneness. There are no exceptions.

Do you remember how loving and tender the sweetest of souls was to the sinner, whom he forgave and was most eager to help? Does it not seem strange that man did not follow this clue to its full significance, to the perfect love, the omnipresence of God which knows no partiality, no separation? What a wonderful significance the words of Jesus have for us when we know what he means by saying that he came to bring life (not death) and immortality to light!

Pause yet again to feel yourself grounded in eternity, not merely as an affair of thought, but as a living realisation. Feel it, shut off steam, settle down in repose, and rest in the everlasting arms. Let the tide of life pass over and by you, let yourself be a part of it, yet not of it. When you find it expedient to move rapidly, let your outer self, as it were, move while your inner is at peace, is as still, as unmoved by the hurry and scurry of the crowd as yonder cloud, floating along in the beautiful blue sea of the heavenly

silence. Detach your inner self, set it apart to be ever aware of what you truly are as an immortal soul, a dweller in eternity. Refresh yourself again and again in this great ideal. Exclude nothing in your life from it. Come back to this consciousness every time you lose it and make a new start.

The thought of inclusiveness gives the clue to the correction of the errors which we have noted in the foregoing pages. We see that no atom, no event, no shadow or accident, is outside of the directly given life of Deity. Nothing is trivial, nothing is without significance in the divine economy. He who does not begin by loving cannot hope to understand; for to condemn at the outset is to condemn all through,—to doubt that God is God, that "order is heaven's first law." For the true clue is the rationality of things, the significance of struggle, the place of pain and passion in the world. Think back of, within your own present trials to find the divine tendency, the love in what seems to be oppression, and you shall really find the unity of your life, begin to see things as they are.

It is possible in large measure to overcome temporal limitations by carrying out the great thought of the eternal order. This is a way of making practical the truth of the spiritual vision. We learn that nature is real in the eternal idea of God. The real system of nature is God's wisdom, will,

in so far as it can be objectively manifested. Nature is God's life progressively working itself out in the forms of space and time. We truly see it when we turn the eye of the soul within to apprehend the divine will, when we grasp the law of the Christ, and take the same attitude towards nature which Jesus took in regard to the life before him: "Father, not my will, but Thine be done." To affirm that nature is an illusion is in part to deny the will of God. To declare that nature is perfect now, or that space and time are unreal, is also to deny the divine will. For the world of time is the method of God in the realisation of His idea. Nature is perfected, not in a moment, but through time, that is, through eternity. We must therefore rid our minds of the idea that "creation," or eternity, or the divine order, is beyond or outside of just such rich moments as they pass. The struggles of to-day—yes, just these trying contests—are of worth in the great process; they are a part of perfection, which is not something by itself, or at the end of all things. There is no end; there is an ever-pulsating beauty which never dies, a glory which never fades. Unless you are content thus to learn nature, you may as well forego the endeavour to understand her. For she longs to be known as she is, not as some metaphysical ascetic has made her out to be. When the clue to nature's rationality is found, we regard

the world as nature transfigured, as a part of the spiritual life; we pass beyond the hasty judgments of all metaphysics of the "seeming," shake off the burdens of agnosticism and mystical pessimism. In adjusting ourselves to nature as a part of the life of God, in grounding ourselves in eternity, we attain a much higher unity of the self. Our symphony takes on the eternal *motif*, a transcendental theme. We thus gain inspiration of priceless value in the development of peace, poise. We look before and after with infinitely wider vision. We live in the temporal with greater zest, but as members of eternity.

CHAPTER XV

EVOLUTION

THE great fact in regard to nature is that it cannot be understood alone. Its unity is not in itself, but in the divine order in which it fulfils an organic ideal. Its life is not wholly its own, but is a manifestation of that supreme Life from which all activities spring. It is not even known by itself, but is revealed to man through consciousness, individual, social, and spiritual. Hence the basis of natural evolution must be sought in that larger system which characterises the divine order as a whole. Evolution is a natural consequence of the progressively manifested life of God. If it could be sundered from Him, God's life would lose part of its significance, its beauty, its perfection. Here is the reality of evolution. For, in a sense, evolution is as real, as fraught with value as the system of ideas which its processes manifest. In fact, the spiritual totality of things has little meaning apart from the temporal evolution. There is no eternity as bare eternity. It has significance through the

meaning which fills it, the moments as they succeed one another.

Second in importance to the fact that life is ultimately known to us as consciousness, we therefore place the fact that it is known as an evolution; but evolution as here considered is, of course, a purely philosophical conception. Nature is a phase of the spiritual life, the phase wherein certain divine forces are objectively working out the thought of God. To add the idea of evolution is simply to make more explicit the fact that the divine life is progressively revealed. The going forth of the creative spirit, or divine involution, of course precedes its visible growth. All this is to be borne in mind when we speak of evolution. With chance-evolution, or growth proceeding spontaneously out of no basis and toward no end, the present doctrine has nothing to do.

What, then, is evolution? Undoubtedly the best way to illustrate the general principle is by starting with the simple phenomena of growth. The gradual change from seed to fruition in plant life is typical. This may or may not mean progress. For it may be mere repetition of the life of its predecessors in the plant world. But if the seed happens to be planted in an unusually fertile soil, is cross-fertilised or otherwise assisted, we may have not only an improved plant, but a new variety or species,—in other words, evolution.

Evolution thus grows insensibly out of growth itself. In nature there is both a tendency to repetition and a tendency to variation. The one tendency may be said to represent the conservative activity of God, the other the creative. When the creative activity is predominant we have evolution. All growth is a balance between more or less opposing tendencies. The type tends to persist, and the environment tends to break it down. The seed vigorously expands from within; the surrounding circumstances may either assist or tend to modify the growing life. Growth and evolution are both co-operative, are not to be understood apart from these twofold factors of the individual and its environment, inner and outer.

To be sure, authorities differ in regard to the relative importance of inner and outer. Those who emphasise the factors of development from within are usually called idealists, while those who lay stress upon environment are called realists. These two points of view are found throughout the history of thought. Among moral philosophers, for example, we find two tendencies. The realistic philosophers study the customs of primitive peoples and gradually trace the evolution of the moral life from the non-moral. The sense of moral obligation is thus supposed to be derived from certain pre-moral tendencies, from the physical behaviour of men in little groups or clans.

By some ethical philosophers the moral sense is closely identified with the desire for pleasure. The idealistic philosophers, on the other hand, contend that it is the fine, inner distinctions, the promptings and alternatives of conscience which reveal right and wrong. Again, psychologists are divided into two schools. The physiological psychologist studies, tabulates, and experiments with the physical states found in connection with the states of mind. Learning that all mental states are accompanied by certain conditions of the brain, he reasons that the mind is conditioned by, or is parallel to, the body. On the other hand, there are those who place so much stress on the powers of mind that they assert the supremacy of thought and the will, to the neglect of the accompanying physiological conditions. In philosophy, also, most of the great thinkers have been either realists or idealists.

Nature is of great assistance in the solution of this problem. Plant life grows from centre to circumference, that is, from seed to rounded plant. All animal life begins in a microscopic centre or cell, and expands by progressive multiplication or cell division. And so with evolution, especially mental evolution, the progress of ideas in invention, education, and discovery. The great external development attendant upon a new invention was subsequent to the quickening and development

of one idea in one person's mind. Our ideas develop and multiply, even as cells aggregate and grow, from centre to circumference. The first essential is the seed, the cell, or idea. Without that there can be no growth. Granted that, and environment may be a wonderful help. There must be both inner and outer, but the inner is the centre of power.

The clue to evolution is this gradual change from within. Indeed, this is what we understand by evolution. For, as here considered, nature, and therefore evolution, is unintelligible apart from consciousness. Mind is not introduced into evolution at a later stage; it is not a product of matter or of the brain. We know nothing of evolution as merely physical, with no conscious impelling power. The factors of evolution are factors of consciousness. The progressive changes in form are due to modifications from within the structure, acted upon by other forces playing upon the structure from without, but no less divine in the ultimate sense of the word. Everything temporal at some period has had a gradual growth by inner expansion and outward assistance, though that assistance may have come through struggle. Nothing has attained its present relatively high state of development by any other method. There is no exception. That is what we mean by the universal law of evolution.

It is not simply that physical man was developed from an anthropoid ancestor, but that every individual to some extent repeats biologically and mentally, socially and spiritually, the age-long process of progressive change. Even what we call the routine life of vegetation is a summary of myriad attainments of ancient evolution. Habit is thus merely a routine repetition of that which was gradually acquired. Evolution is progressive "causation," if you will. To know a thing you must retrace its history until you come to a time when the thing in question is emerging out of a pre-existent whole. In other words, nothing comes out of "the air" and nothing functions "in the air." Every force works through something. Every event springs out of a concrete environment adequate to produce it. There is no need of imported forces. Life is in the making. To know it you must in thought make or create with it. And by these terms "make" and "create" you must always understand a progressive achievement. If any one brings forward an alleged ready-made product or complete "revelation," meet him with suspicion, remembering that there is self-deception somewhere, or at least entire ignorance of the laws of being.

Even philosophy, which with good reason is considered as originating in Greece, was a progressive outgrowth of prephilosophic ages. Early

philosophy in Greece was simply a different way of regarding that which was very old. It was a parting of the ways at points where mythology failed to satisfy. But when it came to offering explanations for natural phenomena, even the Ionian physicists and the Eleatic metaphysicians made free use of mythological material. Myths survived far into Plato's time. Plato constantly illustrates by them, and when he is hard put for a theory he introduces a myth. The most exact statement concerning the origin of philosophy is this: "somewhere about," that is, during several centuries, say from 600 to 400 B.C., mythology gradually became philosophy. There is no doctrine seemingly so original that is not thus in many respects due to previous ages of speculation.

Or illustrate by your own life to-day. You happen to be a victim of nervous prostration. Was it suddenly brought upon you? No; for months and years you have been rushing, straining, you have been nervously tense, immoderate. The collapse was only a culmination. The cause was your wrong mode of life during years. How may you regain health? There is but one method of permanent restoration, namely, through gradual evolution. If you obey certain conditions, mental and physiological, nature will slowly restore the injured organism. Then you must gradually acquire a different habit of life by

painstaking and persistent detail. Everything in the wide universe has been built point by point, detail by detail. There is no other way. If you would build anew, begin with what you have, and point by point establish a new direction of energy. There is no other way. There are hot-house methods, but they are not desirable in the long run. One may use higher and greater forces, but the law is the same; for acceleration of motion does not mean a new law of growth.

Yet, after all has been said concerning adaptation to external environment, the final word relates to the inceptive growth from within. The best illustration of this is the development of our ideas. To become educated, to attain self-expression, we must have companionship, books, lessons, teachers, varied experiences, and external aids of many kinds. But the essential, without which there could be no education, is the activity of the soul, the coming forth of that particular self-hood in us which differentiates us from all other individuals. If we are ever to understand evolution at large, we must first take account of this inner being which demands expression, and to a certain extent triumphs over circumstances.

While we cannot profitably at this point enter further into the merits of the idealistic and realistic controversy, I emphasise the fact that the physical evolutionists, with all their mighty

researches since the publication of Spencer's *Psychology* and Darwin's *Origin of Species*, have never yet explained the real point at issue,—the appearance of new species, or accounted for the dawning of consciousness and the beginnings of the moral life. From the point of view of nature as a part of the divine order, one therefore says to the physicist, the realistic ethical philosopher, and to all mere evolutionists, Carry the hypothesis of self-acting evolution as far as you can; collect all the data; explain, if possible, all the facts, even the fact of consciousness and the idea of God, the soul, and immortality. But be sure that you are first true to the facts as presented in actual life; do not sunder man's environment from the conscious world in which it is found. It is impossible to abstract evolution from life as a whole. Strictly speaking, we must have a theory of the ultimate nature and origin of things before we can intelligently study evolution. To probe evolution is equivalent to sounding consciousness.

We must possess great insight into ourselves before we can begin to see what we mean by having so many moods or selves, before we can detect the latent divine ideal. Our self is too large, too complex to be shown in any one mood or experience. We must live with the self day by day and year by year. We must learn what we truly are by observing the processes of feeling,

thought, volition, pleasure, and pain, by which we reveal now this phase of the self, now that. The real self is not this evolving self as observed at any one time. The real individual is the soul or unit lying within and behind these multiform moods and selves in their historical manifestation. What we mean to be in life is discoverable through our total history. In the same way it may be said of the universe at large, that what God means through it is found by acquaintance with it as an historical whole. We thus find the reason for things by tracing them far back of their evolution to the source out of which they sprang.

We must, then, break away from local ruts, scenes, and events, and contemplate great wholes. Life is a whole, and a whole is comprehensible through knowledge of all its parts. This little self of to-day, with its fears, its doubts, and its circumspect thoughts, is only a fragment. Come out into the great world, ascend the mountain-top, and look far and wide. You should not expect to understand a thing by putting your eyes down close to it. There are manifold illusions in the near-by vision. We must have perspective, and that, too, must have its perspective. This is what we mean by the point of view of evolution. It is the interpretation of life in the light of its totality as a progressive movement with a divine basis. The divine is seen both in the immanent, resident

power, and in the activities of environment, in the part and in the whole. Evolution is the law or method whereby the inner is progressively made manifest through the outer. The expression of the inner, or soul, is the end. The activity of the environment, or outer circumstances, is the means. As a whole, evolution is the temporal revelation of God, the objective result of God's life as it goes forth in progressive manifestation.

Another point to note is that we are in possession of a method of analysing experience. Suppose that, for example, you are contemplating a trip to foreign lands. Accordingly, for years you study the languages of the countries which you propose to visit, you read the history, art, and literature. At length you adopt clearly formulated views. You have a theory concerning the people, a strongly marked theory of the art and literature. Thus equipped you depart for the foreign land. The chances are that the first few days or weeks of your stay your most carefully thought-out prejudgments will be rudely upset. In the presence of reality all opinions are modified. One finds a thousand things which the books said nothing about. One must overcome a thousand prejudices in order to come somewhere near seeing things as they are. In other words, all *a priori* theories, all theories devised in advance of experience, are likely to be greatly modified by

actual life. This is true even in physics, in chemistry, in all domains of thought. Our calculations may be decidedly upset by the presence of some factor of which we took no account.

We see, then, how difficult it would be to make use of the panaceas of social reformers who claim that the social problem is to be solved without regard to evolution. For life pulsates; it moves forward even while we are devising our social schemes. Oliver Wendell Holmes tells us that we must begin with the grandparents if we would reform a man. You cannot expect to modify a tree whereon the blossoms have already appeared. You must begin far back. Experience will show you that nothing can be done suddenly. Evolution shows us not one sudden change in all the history of the world, except as the outcome of slow, minute, gradually accumulated modifications and painstaking preparations.

If you are to reform the world, you must conform to nature's law of growth or accomplish nothing. You must begin by finding one receptive listener, into whose mind you may put one idea and leave it to germinate. If you look for results you will be disappointed. If your idea spreads to a few people during your lifetime, congratulate yourself; for most reformative ideas must encounter opposition for a generation or two before they are even considered. You simply

cannot coerce. And even if you succeed in influencing people, you cannot predict the result. No one knows what will come of your idea. No one shall know until the result shall come. For you have put your ideas into relation with other men's ideas, and the outcome will probably be a new species. There is no science of prediction which covers that.

On the supposition that man is "perfect now," we must either resort to the hypothesis of illusion to account for the sense of imperfection, or we must regard life as a merely mechanical unfolding of that which is rigidly predestined. If we adopt the latter hypothesis the whole world is a huge machine; there is nothing to be achieved, for all is fated in advance; desire is only a new mechanical combination, ambition is the heat aroused by the ceaseless whirr of the machinery; freedom is an absolute myth; life is a snare and a delusion; the universe was wound up ages go, and when it runs down the weary round will be ended. In such a universe human helpfulness has no meaning. Even environment is no assistance; for environment is mechanically compelled to serve. It is a mere truism to state that life is not constituted in that way. The utmost we are authorised to say is that there are certain tendencies. When you come into existence you tend to be a certain individual. The changes in your surroundings tend to affect

you in certain ways. Whether the occasion makes the man, or man makes the occasion, depends on a great many factors. What we are to become depends largely on what we do, and what we shall do we cannot tell until the hour arrives. To a certain extent, therefore, life is experimental and we are experimenters. A principle which is applicable in society to-day may not be applicable to-morrow. The virtue of to-day may be the vice of to-morrow. Thousands of deeds once wrought in the name of religion are now utterly repugnant to us. What some have deemed right and have suffered martyrdom for, we now classify as foolishness.

How absurd, then, to insist that there are absolute principles which hold true through all ages without regard to evolution! There may be certain great laws and virtues that are always commendable. But their interpretation varies from age to age. The love of truth, the zeal for religion is differently expressed. How, then, are you to understand these things apart from their evolution? Even freedom, surely one of the ideals for which we should ever strive, is progressively attained. On the supposition that man is eternally free, it is still true that his consciousness of freedom has an evolution; that even when conscious of his freedom he may only gradually express that consciousness as rapidly as he conquers

his lower nature, as social conditions become more favourable. For, although the inner life is primary, prior, and of great power, it is not absolute, it is in part entirely dependent on environment.

The essential point is that you cannot fully, rationally describe man in terms of the ideal; you must also take into account the point in evolution which he has reached to-day. The ideal is a possibility. The conditions of evolution are actualities. At any stage man is adequately describable only in terms of both the actual and the ideal, which the actual seeks to become. And with most of us the chief need is to come to judgment in the living now.

Therefore, if we reject the perfection theory, the alternative is to study life as it exists to-day and ask, Whither is it tending? What are the motive forces? In other words, study life as a whole, as you would study a foreign people when you are actually in the foreign land. Let your observations be first hand, concrete, living, true to fact. There are manifold ideals resident in actual life, seeking to come forth. Study these as outgrowths of something immediately past and as leading to something in the near-by future. These may lead to other ideals which will yield to yet others. The motive power that is now working at one centre may change its direction and func-

tion elsewhere, as nations have had their day and ceased to be.

The factors of any present-day prob em are resident in the problem itself, not outside of it in some abstract world. Life unfolds from within, making use of whatever it meets. All life pursues ends. To know what that life is, to learn the nature of the ends or ideals, we must examine deeply into this living, evolving miracle.

The reason for emphasising the experimental side of life is found in the fact that exponents of the cut-and-dried systems of philosophy are so emphatic in the opposite direction. It is so easy to formulate a perfected social scheme. All would be well and good if there were no attempt to apply these artificial doctrines. But when this attempt is made the schemes do not fit. Therefore, it is well to bear in mind that, deeper than these predictions and human systems there is a spiritual tendency of things. "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth." It comes by a law of its own. With the Spirit, life is indeed no experiment. But from the human point of view there is always reason to leave a large section open for future developments of which we cannot now take account.

The abstract philosopher formulates a rule which he applies from outside, seeking to solve all problems by that. If people would only accept his creed, follow his method, drink his universal

specific, they would become perfectly happy and sound, they would be eternally saved. We find this tendency in religion, we find it among teachers, authors, among all sorts and conditions of leaders of men. The philosophy of this book is so far a revolt from that position that we counsel entire allegiance to the concrete method, the study of life as it pulsates in and through us. But we give this further admonition: Search life deeply enough to find all that is actually resident there, seeking expression: press home your thought to the eternal whole, to the ground of all things in the divine order.

Perhaps the best way to contrast these two methods is by reference to two general methods of education. The old education, by the text-book method, was virtually an attempt to make all men alike. All were to take the same studies. All were to use the same books. Think of the hours and days and months that were spent in committing names and dates and grammatical rules to memory! Think of the children who have suffered under this coercive system! Under the new *régime* the teacher studies his pupil. He observes him while the pupil is doing something he really wants to do. He thus acquaints himself with the child's tendencies, his needs and aspirations. He then adapts himself to these individual needs, seeks to call out the soul.

Our philosophical plan is an adaptation of the same method. We study the behaviour of nature, of nations, of individuals,—men and women,—to learn what God, the omnipresent Spirit, is seeking to achieve through it all. And we can no more formulate a rule which applies to all cases than we can find an abstract scheme of education which shall apply to all types of minds. Life is concrete. It is here, pulsating now. One moment of present observation is worth a thousand fossil specimens of human philosophy. The very meaning of evolution itself is bound up with the concrete. According to the old idea of creation God dwelt afar upon a great white throne, issued creative fiats, and the thing was done in six days. Now we know that the merest incident in your life or mine is part of the great forward pulse of evolution.

CHAPTER XVI

LOWER AND HIGHER

ONE of the most noteworthy facts in the realm of natural evolution is the contrast between lower and higher forces. For long ages in large part a contest between the weak and the strong, the less and the more ferocious, this conflict at length emerges as a prominent characteristic of the moral order. To understand this contest as a world-process is to possess a principle of philosophical interpretation which contains a solution of the problem of evil. The clue is worth following to the end, since it is, perhaps, the most direct guide to the unity of life. In fact, when materialism fails, when physical science falls back impotent in the presence of consciousness and the facts of the moral order, this is the alternative. The principle is not a new one, but it assumes new significance in the light of the philosophy of evolution. The failure of materialistic evolutionism to account for its own facts is a powerful argument in favor of returning to the ancient principle of interpretation.

In quest of modern evidence we are aided at the outset by the pictures which geology and the other natural sciences have drawn for us of the successive stages of plant and animal life. There was the carboniferous age, for example, with its grossly luxuriant vegetation, the remains of which, stored away in the earth, now serve the latest arrival—man. From simple to complex, from lower to higher organisation, has been the history of all forms, types, and modes of life. Species after species of plants and animals came on the scene, flourished for a time, and ceased to be. Yet the lower forms did not in one sense cease to exist; for while the gigantic plants and animals of prehistoric times perished utterly, their more finely built successors assimilated the better results of their existence, so that man, as the highest animal of all, is an epitome of creation. Size and strength once counted for everything. But a day came when cunning played the more prominent part. With the growth of mind, life became still more refined, and a wonderful inner world of intellectual and religious standards began to develop.

Thus savagery gave place to the beginnings of civilisation, and nation after nation had its day, then vanished for ever. Time was when man was almost wholly devoted to warfare, and no protest was made when man slew his brother man. But at length he began to despise bloodshed and culti-

vate the arts of peace. We have warfare with us still, and its instruments are the cruelest known to history. But each war is fought with greater protests, and year by year wise men are finding higher substitutes for the gun and the sword. The important fact is not the survival of warlike traits, but the appearance of something higher.

It would be an unwarranted generalisation to claim that evolution has steadily advanced from lower to higher. The law of evolution provides for downward growths, like the descending branches of a tree, and evolution is not necessarily a law of such uniformity and beauty as the symmetry of the tree suggests. Superior peoples, like the Greeks, may give place to inferior nations. Great losses may occur amidst small gains. But the march of the whole nevertheless shows this general principle to be a law of life. There is in nature and in man a tendency to aspire, and with the appearance of new forms and superior standards the old in due time gives place. The great fact is not that there is a lower to torment us by its survival, but that we make a constructive reaction upon it. The justification of the contest is that which is produced by it. If the lower disappeared at once when the higher came on the scene, evolution would cease. The entire history of nature's products shows that conflict of lower and higher is a law of existence. Everything that

lives must struggle to live, and everything new must fight for existence with that which already occupies the field. But in so struggling it develops the greater power which enables it eventually to triumph. The mere fact that the forms of life by which we are now environed are here shows that there has been an age-long contest for life. However much evolutionists may differ in the use of terms all agree in emphasising the law of struggle.

In the intellectual world, also, truth is only established through conflict. The bitterly opposed truth of to-day is on equal terms with the old to-morrow, and will soon be a conservative doctrine in comparison with a later discovery. Conservatism holds radicalism in check, and the progressive leader of a new generation wakens the soul from the dogmatic slumbers of the past. The new idea becomes a part of everybody's life, to become in turn an encrusted dogma. Thus ever on and on, in ceaseless, tireless flow, the great tide of life and thought sweeps forward.

The struggle seems terribly bitter at times, namely, in the cruel oppressions of man's servitude, out of which freedom grew, the fierce warfare of hate over which love triumphed, and the harsh intolerance which gave birth to tolerance. Again and again, lower and higher have gone down, as it were in a life-and-death grasp. The long contest

of egoism and altruism, seen in its beginnings as the struggle of the higher for emancipation, and the desperate endeavours of the lower to keep it in subjection, seems for ages to be a decidedly uncertain struggle. But out of the bitterest feuds the noblest fruits have come. Such is the pathway of the Spirit.

To the majority of men the contest of the forces which make for righteousness and those which make for unrighteousness has been a complete mystery. It was natural to attribute the mischief to an adversary who must be fought. Thus dualism was the philosophy which man naturally developed when he sought to account for the strife. As man was supposed to be at the mercy of an adversary outside of himself, the true explanation was for ages overlooked. Through the perspective of the evolutionary centuries we are now able to see the meaning of the conflict as primarily resident in man, in whom the human was added to the animal, which thereupon became a lower in relation to a higher. The crowning glory of the animal world thus became the untamed lower self of man. In his ignorance man misunderstood and fought the beast in him, then in a measure succumbed where he knew not how to conquer. Thus we already understand in part the long ages of sin and degradation. The philosophy of evolution has made us familiar with

the details of man's animal origin. It is only necessary to hint at the great fact. But the law that is not yet clear is the principle of compensation. Many who clearly see the necessity of conflict in the physical world fail to see that the same mighty contest has been transferred to the moral world, that it is just this conflict which has led to the moral products of to-day. The law is not adequately stated by the evolutionists. You shall look in vain to find in nature the source of all that man would be; for another higher has succeeded nature as a transcended lower. But the relationship is the same. As we now see the value of plant and animal evolution, so we may appreciate man's moral and spiritual contests if we will but look far and high enough.

If you will look through the world for the darkest facts of man's sinful life, you will find none which cannot be classed under this head. The lower is not present there alone; there is a higher nature there, patiently seeking recognition. Without consciousness of a higher it would be impossible to know that something else is lower. To sin is to choose and manifest a lower in the presence of a higher. Where there is no choice there is no wrong. It is the mistaken use of man's powers which lies at the root of evil. It is not the power used that is evil. All power is in itself good, that is, when rightly used. Evolution from lower to

higher proves itself good by its fruits. The contrast between a better and a worse, the conflict whereby man finally triumphs, even the suffering which he endures—all this is good, so far as he brings good out of it. For only by comparison with that which is unlike it is anything known. Light is light to us because we have known darkness; truth is true because we have known error. There is surely no reason to complain of the conditions whereon we have thrived, with which we have wrestled. It is too soon to generalise about all moral problems. But through the mists of the long ages of conflict we see the light; what man has accomplished in the lower domains he can repeat in higher forms; we see the law and it sufficeth to clear away the mystery, at least in part. The rest is work, downright work.

Does this seem too optimistic an interpretation of human nature? Then look again at human history, and behold the law. See man appearing on the stage of the animal world, ignorant, emotional, swept by violent passions and fears. See these fierce forces at play. Remember the long road which man had to climb, the high attainments for which he has paid a mighty price. Is it any wonder that, possessing such possibilities and forces, man has been capable of almost every excess? He has paid a tremendous price for his sin in a universe where a prize is offered for virtue.

He has dallied and played with fire to the bitter end. But with it all the spirit of progress has moved until, little by little, knowledge has taken the place of ignorance, man has learned the law of pain and pleasure, and finally the law of mastery of the animal self.

For example, look more closely at the conflict of man's better self with the fierce outbursts of passion in him. The usual method is to condemn man for possessing the passion. He is not helped to overcome it, he is told that he is a sinner or is imprisoned by organised ignorance with a hundred other victims. Thus the strife, the duality, is intensified. But explain the origin of the animal in man, explain that the existence of the lower is essential to the growth of the higher, and the whole problem is put in a new and hopeful light. It is not now a question of warfare, but of transmutation of energy from lower to higher; not a demand for extermination, but for assimilation.

The same power which one might expend as bitter enmity, coercion, and warfare may be expressed as sweet brotherhood, persuasion, and peace. There was wrong-doing only while the lower was dominant. The first great discovery is the possibility of transmutation. The second is the fact that the lower in itself is good, that it is a manifestation of God's power. The third is the

value of the lower to the higher, namely, that evolution proceeds through struggle.

Thus the old dualism is transformed into unity. God is on both sides of the line. The power is the same in contrasted forms, just as, for example, the planets are held in their positions in space by both centrifugal and centripetal energy. It is all one piece, one system, one adaptation of means to ends. That which has been deemed a mystery and has been charged against God is precisely the state of affairs which makes all moral growth possible. It was the belief that one of the factors was good, the other evil, which led men off the track. It was not till the rise of the philosophy of evolution that man began to see his theoretical mistake. With the change in point of view, there is gradually coming about a change in the moral attitude. In due course the whole matter will be handed over to education. For what man needs is enlightenment. He needs just this priceless knowledge that all life is a system, an order; that man is the centre of attraction of opposing forces, and that it is possible for him by understanding the law of transmutation, or growth, to add higher to lower, and highest to higher, till all that is earthy be lifted up, till the Christ within him draw all else to its own transcendent plane.

The prospect that there may be unity where we once feared all might be chaos is the last great

victory in our plea for the right to view the universe as a divine order. We thus steal into the stronghold of the enemy in disguise. Let us maintain the disguise and cling to the ideal of unity. Let us dispense for ever with the idea of evil in so far as it is attributed to the general system of things, and relegate it to the limbo whither the devil and hell, regarded as generalities, have already been consigned. Let us forego all condemnation of the universe, and take the hope at its word which evolution suggests. This does not mean the denial of any facts. A given misdeed, such as a murder, is as bad as ever. To call evil "lower" is not to excuse it, nor to grant the least license to commit it. Nor does it entitle us to do evil that good may come. The new terminology, based on the facts of evolution, gives us a way of thinking about life as a whole which does away with the ultimate dualism, and provides a practical method of overcoming evil. It calls for a broader way of looking at things, one which considers not only the sin of evil, but all the circumstances, inheritances, physiological conditions, pathological states, mental inabilities, and temptations; and which regards the sinner from the point of view of his ideal possibilities as a moral being, a son of God, not as a miserable sinner to be autocratically condemned.

Another reason for choosing the terms "lower"

and "higher" instead of the terms "evil" and "good" is that in deepest truth they are relative. It is a truism in these days to state that the intuition of one age becomes the reason of the next and the superstition of the third. The utmost that can be said for any science, philosophy, or religion is that it is the best that could be developed in a given age. Man has outgrown creeds and customs too fast to warrant the belief that there is anything absolute. The command to do right is, of course, absolute. But, when all has been said, it does not matter so much what is done as that the highest we know is done. All that the universe can reasonably demand of us at any time is that we obey the higher instead of the lower.

Nothing is more noticeable in our comments on one another than the implication that some actions are better than others. The consciousness of lower and higher is so characteristic of the race that we may venture to define man as the being who is conscious of a lower and a higher. In the inmost life of each of us this distinction is clearly marked. We are aware of certain aspirations, hopes, promptings. On the other hand, we are dissatisfied, exasperated, constantly exclaiming, If I could but master this unruly self! If I could be free from the animal, the selfish, and the tyrannical!

A struggle between selves,—this is the history of

life; and one must find the love of God in this struggle if it is to be found at all. In one way or another the principle is the same. It is the contest between ignorance and knowledge, between pain and harmony, thought and sensation, or soul and body; and, in naming this last contrast, we have touched upon the heart of the entire process.

We may confidently declare that we are spiritual beings in the rough, souls possessing untrained physical organisms and a multitude of conflicting forces. The vital question ever is, How shall we master and transmute the untrained? For the problem of the ultimate nature and origin of lower and higher is of far less consequence than that of their proper adjustment. Let us, therefore, take ourselves simply as we are,—conscious beings existing in a world where events move forward by evolution, that is, by change from lower to higher. We are played upon by two streams of energy, the one drawing us down, the other inviting us up. Man, the soul, existing between, has the power to obey the one or the other. What is the wisest attitude toward each of these forms of energy?—that is our question.

From one point of view, it would seem wise to speak of these two forms of life as one power, since both may be said to make for our moral and spiritual evolution. This doctrine is urged with great emphasis nowadays. All roads lead to

Rome it is said: "all is good." It matters nct what you do, you are sure to come out right; for there is no evil. Any situation in which you find yourself placed is the best possible situation. But this is fatalism with a vengeance. It is a denial of the conditions whereby all progress takes place. For where all is indiscriminately good, there is neither lower nor higher; all intellectual, moral, and spiritual standards are vain; one thing is as good as another, crime is as good as benevolence, robbery as good as generosity.

But the very life of morality is grounded in distinctions. Conscience is nothing if not a law that some deeds are right, some wrong. Moreover, the fact of freedom implies power to choose between two or more alternatives. Hence several courses are possible, and responsibility rests upon us in so far as we are enlightened. Nothing could be further from the facts of our moral consciousness than to assert that "we all do as well as we know." The unqualified declaration that "all is good" is positively immoral. To assert that "our circumstances could not have been otherwise" is literally to declare that since the foundation of the world there has not been a moment of freedom, there never has been an alternative; every event, without exception, has come from a single source. It follows that we are automata, machines. On the other hand, if but one moment of freedom

ever existed, if man ever committed one act of his own, circumstances might have been different. If there is a right there is also a wrong. If there are lower and higher alternatives and forces, progress is possible.

It is not only necessary to distinguish lower from higher in nature, but to discriminate between nature and the moral sphere, between what *is* and what *ought to be*. Were it true that "whatever is, is right," there could be no progress. That which *is* is only part of life, and is unintelligible by itself. We are called upon to regard that which is, from the point of view of *what it can be made to become* by fidelity to what ought to be. That which is, may be made right by action in accordance with a higher standard.

Even regarded from the point of view of *that which is*, the universe is not constructed on the plan of one power only: its harmony is the result of opposing forces, the one pulling up, the other down; one centripetal, another centrifugal; one moving toward death, the other toward life; one negative, the other positive; one moving toward Rome, the other away from it. A product of two forces, male and female, animal and human, human and divine, man naturally begins his experience in dual form. Morally, he stands between conflicting forces, one of which he must choose, both of which he cannot simultaneously

obey. Both are essential in a moral universe; and therefore both are, from one point of view, good. Both are from God, yet we must distinguish between them. But if, conscious of the higher, man chooses the lower, he is surely doing wrong and must suffer wrong.

Rome is not to be reached by continually going down-hill. The only point to be gained by going downward is the knowledge that it is wrong, that it is a misuse of energy. Every man is free to go down-hill. But by the eternal law of cause and effect, as the wrong-doing increases the suffering becomes more intense. The true statement is this: Although the road to Rome is not down-hill, at every turn there is a sign-board pointing back to Rome; and thus there are no uninformed souls. The consciousness of lower and higher never deserts us. Every situation in life may be turned to good account when man learns its evolutionary meaning.

Any philosophy is to be rejected, therefore, which minimises the power and place of conscience. That morality varies from age to age is no argument against its divine origin. A people may see the ideal more or less clearly, but the vision is ever there. It is always lower to hate and higher to love. Hate and love may assume many new forms, and in our self-complacency we may deem ourselves free from the vices of our

ancestors. But the contest continues, though in altered circumstances; and always there is a prompting which leads us on and on.

The full significance of moral distinctions is only understood in the light of the high ethical ideals to be achieved. That justice may be done, that righteousness may triumph, we must be on the alert for those fine discriminations which differentiate the higher from the lower. It is because man is to ascend so high that he must begin far down in the animal realm, and learn by painful experience what is worthy and what is unworthy. Thus every step in the ascent is marked by moral choice and contest. The full meaning of that contest is only seen when man learns that it was his lower self which wanted to sin and degenerate; that in his heart of hearts he was troubled by a divine unrest, a longing for the perfect, the beautiful, and the true, which he was free to choose.

Let it be remembered that the lower nature is only to be understood in reference to the higher. Evil is incomprehensible alone. It will ever seem dark and mysterious, irreconcilable with the divine love, as long as we look downward and not up.

In the past man has allowed himself to become absorbed in contemplation of the lower to the neglect of the higher. He has condemned himself, condemned men, and cursed God. Consequently, he has greatly intensified the difficulties

of life's problem, for life always looks dark when we look only at the dark side. But if a higher product may be brought out of the contest we must look at that contest from the evolutionary point of view Just as a seed or embryo is intelligible from the point of view of the perfected product presently to be developed out of it, so with pain and disease, passion, and all that is distressing. These are not to be understood or conquered alone. It is useless to try to drive out passion. The only way to master it is to lift the organism to a level where passion is impossible.

The infant is to become the man. Remember this when the disagreeable period of youth sets in. The vicious man may become the virtuous. The ignorant may become wise. The diseased may become healthy. Out of every contest between lower and higher a nobler product may rise. That product may give place to a nobler, and so on. Life is, or may become, progressive. Man is inclined to be a progressive being. This great possibility cannot be too often repeated. We may regard ourselves as angels in the making. The essential is to dwell upon the positive side, cleave to the ideal, aspire, lift up, as if grasping the hand of some guardian spirit, by whose power we may triumph over all that binds and enslaves.

When we are in search of unity we must find it, therefore, not by philosophically levelling all

forces into one, by sweeping away all standards except our favourite doctrine, but by turning from the contrast and the conflict to the one great Life behind. The desideratum is not the destruction of one force that the other may live, but the perfect balance between them. Both are essential to the harmony of life. Behind, within, and around them, in all their encounters, there is One so great, so wise, that all that exists, all that can ever occur, is carried forward, and will—so hope assures us—be turned to account. The two forces are thus regarded by the philosophy of hope as members of one system.

It surely needs no argument to show that an effect cannot be greater than its cause. The lower cannot give birth to the higher, for the higher is more elaborately developed and serves a nobler end. Moreover, the contrast is ultimate, so far as we can see. From the dawn of evolution —and possibly there was no dawn—there must have been a lower and a higher; for the two are essential to evolution, as we know from a study of the evolution which is going on within and around us to-day. As long as man continues to advance, there will be a lower and a higher.

If the external changes were causes, evolution would undoubtedly continue indefinitely, and we should have no fixed types. But we know that this is not so. Long ago the animal and vegetal

worlds ceased to be the chief centres of creative activity, and few changes occur nowadays in these kingdoms except those which are brought about by man. Long ago the creative power turned into other channels, now manifesting itself in one nation, now active in the life of another. Hence a country like Egypt, for example, has its day and ceases to be. Its external structures fall into decay, its wise men no longer stand at the head of the learned men of the world, and the balance of power is transferred to some other region, where it becomes active through another type of mind. This may not be the result of a creative "plan," but it clearly exemplifies the actual law of change.

The essence of the ideal method is to dwell upon the higher and let the lower fall into line. Once adopt the philosophy for which I am arguing, and the lower will begin to lose its power. The difficulty has been that we were so absorbed in the negative conditions, in self-condemnation, complaint, and pessimism, that we could not behold the lower in its true light. But when the meaning of the lower is seen as essential to the growth of the higher and the perfection of the soul, the balance of power is gradually transferred from the lower to the higher.

One of the first essentials is the acceptance of the situation as understood from the ideal point

of view. Man is such a being that his highest welfare may only be secured through more or less suffering. The law is universal and knows no exemption until a certain plane is reached. Therefore face the situation as you find it to-day. Acknowledge all that you are, all that you hope for and struggle under. See yourself as the centre of creative activity still unfinished, and see how your life has been softened, purified, strengthened by the pains you have suffered, the hardships you have endured, and the obstacles you have conquered. The advance may have seemed slight at times. You may doubt that you are making progress to-day. But there is always something stirring, and always you must take some attitude toward it. It makes a vast difference whether you hate, condemn, and make yourself miserable, or whether you welcome every opportunity as an occasion for the triumph of wisdom, love, beauty. The same experience will seem a curse or a blessing, according as you view it. It will linger or begin to give way to a higher experience, according to the way in which you welcome it. In the last analysis, therefore, you have only yourself to question, only yourself to blame.

Thus the conclusive evidence that life really is an intermingling of lower and higher, with an ideal outlook, is the application in one's own life of the idealism which the foregoing pages suggest. The

first point is to grasp the law of lower and higher as the intelligible method of dealing with our conflicts. The second is to see that we must acquaint ourselves with the higher in order to possess the power to conquer the lower. How shall we grow in knowledge of the higher? By the same empirical method which has served thus far. That is, we must plunge once more into actual life, and study the activities of man in his pursuit of unity, in his aspirations, his religious experience. For the true higher is the soul, the moral cosmos, the divine order.

CHAPTER XVII

CHRISTIANITY

PROBABLY no term has received a greater variety of definitions than the term Christianity. It has meant a thousand different things to as many persons. It has stood for a thousand incongruous creeds, systems, sects, theories, of reform and plans of salvation. It is redefined in every age, and each age deems its interpretation authoritative, while all previous definitions are classified as partial and historical. The astrologist tells us that Jesus read the signs of the heavens, and was able to foretell great upheavals. Hundreds of Protestant sects quote Jesus' words to prove that he meant just what they believe. The exponent of the Vedanta philosophy assures us that Jesus was simply a Buddhist monk of the Essenes, informed in the mysteries of the Orient. The Jew is positive that Jesus was merely a teacher of traditional doctrines. Probably as time goes on there will be more, rather than fewer, sects which will quote Jesus as authority. The Christian socialist in our day is sure that he has the right clue, and every age may be equally sure.

Amidst this array it would be presumptuous for any one who essays to be fair to all sides to assume that he knows precisely what Christianity is. Every man finds in the New Testament what he is and what he has thought, coupled with the thought of his age. It were folly nowadays to quote Scripture to *prove* one's faith. One might better set that faith forth in its own terms. Yet the fact that so many faiths have found verification in Christianity may be taken to mean that Christianity is universal. All that has been read into the New Testament may be there, except the dogmatism of those who assume that they know all about Jesus and where he was taught. Exponents of the Gospel may err rather by defect than by excess. At any rate, every one is free to say with heartiest enthusiasm what Christianity is to him.

Let us begin by assuming that Christianity is a universal system, that it applies to the entire divine order. It may also be defined as a method of individual consciousness, growth, adjustment; a plan for the regeneration and perfection of the race. Further, it is a religion which fulfils many other faiths. Finally, it is practical,—applies to every situation in human life. These are the broad general outlines within which I shall gradually supply the details, and undertake to make good the assumptions.

1. The prime essential of Christianity as enunciated by Jesus is the discovery of the divine order, the law which makes all things harmoniously purposive in the kingdom of God. From the human point of view, this means the discovery that of himself man is and can do nothing. It means the utter renunciation of self as such.

At first, this looks like a purely negative statement; it is strikingly in contrast with the affirmative individualism of our day. It means the sacrifice of plans, desires, hopes, in so far as these imply personal will or preference. It means that one ceases once for all to choose for self. No longer is one to try to manage the world, or regulate the energies of social reform. One must be ready to go anywhere, be cast into any situation, meet any hardship. The ties of home are to be sundered if necessary. In general, one is to follow the lead of the Spirit. And one is to make this entire consecration of self without knowing that anything is to come in return: it is an entirely free sacrifice, a choice, not the result of compulsion, not foreordained "election." The same great fruits of the Spirit are open to all who will pay the price. Christianity is for the whole people, not for a few favoured mortals.

But that which seemed to be entirely negative proves to be the most positive law. "He that loseth his life shall find it." He who finds that he

is nothing of himself learns that he is everything through individual relation to the divine order. The negative statement is that one is not and cannot be independent, that one is indissolubly linked to humanity and to the Father. To try to be aught of one's self is to seek to build one's own world. One is free to try the experiment. But that is not the road to perfection, nor even to what is called success. "I [the Christ] am the way, the truth, and the life." There is no other way. This is the law of the divine order. A man must put himself into certain relations to reap the results.

Yet that which appears stringent and binding to the one who does not yet love the Father enough to pay the price is the tenderest condition of love to one who is ready. "All 's love, yet all 's law." The soul is bound, yet free. The same conditions are opportunities of freedom or cruel decrees of fate, according as we view them. There can be but one best way; all other roads are inevitably beset by conditions from which there is no escape except by turning to the pathway of the Spirit. There may be myriad courses leading to the one great end, so that the life-round of no two followers of the Spirit may be alike. But the great fact remains that each soul must find the pathway by coming to judgment as Jesus has said, namely, "Not my will but Thine be done."

That will may not be the same for you and for

me. You may be called upon to sacrifice where I shall be asked to retain. I may pass through what would be of little value to you. But the will of God is universal; it applies to the entire divine order. There is a work for you and a work for me, and each of us must find out in his own way, directly from God, what that work is. No one can tell another, yet the law is the same for all. Of myself I can do nothing, but with God and humanity I can do a mighty work. There could not be two omnipotents, two ways in which there should be no obstacle. Granted a universe of myriads of souls, each with a mission, each with power to fulfil that mission, and there must be organisation; each purpose must be organically adjusted in relation to all others. Otherwise there would be chaos. Hence the rigid walls of fate on all sides but one; hence, some are free where others are bound.

This looks like foreordination. Yet once more "all 's love, yet all 's law." The pathway of the Spirit would have no significance for us, unless it were freely chosen. We may follow our own wills if we choose. The universe is large and has room for both the saint and sinner, with a great variety of types between. But *if*—note the condition—if we choose the pathway of the Christ we must follow that course, not as we would personally arrange matters, but as all things work together

towards one great end in the social kingdom of the Spirit. There are many souls, many ideals to consider. Therefore there must be adaptation in the light of the general good, the social kingdom. That is the law of the divine order, and without that man can do nothing in the Christ-world.

The well-nigh discouraging discovery that of one's self one is nothing, is the finding of a centre from which are seen to radiate the innumerable pathways of the Spirit out, out into the great world which knows no bounds. "I can do all things through Him who strengtheneth me." I must first find the centre, then I may proceed to the circumference.

Jesus tells us in many different terms what this centre is. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That is, happy are they who make this great discovery,—that of themselves they are poor indeed, for in that attitude they shall find the only true wealth.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Even grief, with the sense of utter helplessness it brings, is a way into that kingdom in which there is held indeed the comfort of the Spirit. Many times it is the helplessness of the finite in times of mourning which leads the way to the revelation of God's presence.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." "Happy are the gentle," is a later render-

ing. The man of peace is the Christ, he who combines in one life the tenderness of the woman and the strength of the man: he it is who shall have this marvellous power which shall regenerate the earth; he shall possess the world.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." There must be the deep desire, the passionate hungering, before the kingdom shall be found. But they who thus hunger shall not be disappointed.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." The action is reciprocal; he who does a deed for the kingdom will find all things in his life tending to correspond.

Purity of heart, peace, love, all these are conditions of receptivity which invite the Spirit. Even when we are persecuted because we have chosen the "way of the cross" we are entering farther into the kingdom. We ought ever to rejoice, for the opportunity is great, and all who have entered in have been thus persecuted.

Again, Jesus assures us that unless we become as little children we shall in no wise meet the great condition of entrance into the kingdom. One must literally empty the cup, free the mind of theories, consecrate the head as well as the heart. Simplicity, humility, is the prime condition, the receptivity of nature unadorned and untampered

with. If we have intellectual power so much the better, if only we dedicate it to the uses of the Spirit. But only the Spirit can tell us how rightly to use the intellect.

Yet again, we are told that no man can serve two masters. The condition is as inexorable as the most rigid rule in mathematics, and it is a hard saying, especially for those who have wealth; it is becoming harder in our century. It is a question of love or hate,—there is no compromise. The hard saying is not to be explained away as an allegory; it is a literal condition. Man must free himself from all that he hath. If it comes back to him to be used for spiritual ends, well and good, but every cent must be used as the Spirit directs. Poverty is by no means synonymous with Christianity. The ideal is to be free from all material things. One who gains that freedom while possessing great wealth wins the greater triumph, conquers a greater temptation than the monk who courts poverty. But it is not likely that many who choose the kingdom will have this particular triumph to win.

2. The second great discovery is that Christianity is first individual before it leads to the larger social results. Salvation begins with the discovery that the man himself must do the work, that there is no one to do it for him. Salvation is more an affair of life than of belief. To stand

up and confess one's self a follower of Jesus, to say that one believes in him, may be a first step with people of a certain type, but the crucial question is, Does the person who makes this profession of faith live by it hour by hour and day by day? If he merely believes under the supposition that belief saves, he has not yet found the kingdom.

Here we come face to face with an older interpretation of Christianity, and we may as well meet it at once. Let us prepare the way, however, by assuring those who cling to the atonement, that we shall find a way to preserve the essential truth of this doctrine.

If we accept the premise that man is a "depraved" being by inheritance, that an angry God must be appeased, and that the only begotten son had to be sacrificed to set things right; then the doctrine of the atonement in its old form is logical, and the followers of this type of Christianity are justified in their life-and-death struggle for what they believe to be the fundamental principle. One may even admire the conscientiousness of one whom I know who will not associate with an old-time friend because the friend no longer accepts the atonement in just her way. To such a zealot it seems like disloyalty to her Lord to be in the presence of such a disbeliever, although one might remind her that Jesus expressly chose the

company of sinners; that his faith was inclusive, not exclusive.

But our concern is to interpret the sayings of Jesus, not to call other people to account. If it be true that the "letter killeth" while "the Spirit giveth life," we must choose whom we will serve, and estimate the entire doctrine accordingly. Jesus assures us that he came to "bring life and immortality to light." Let us then take him at his word. He also declared that the truth should set men free. We may confidently assume, then, that Jesus' mission was to tell men the truth about life.

Did he begin by informing people that man is "a miserable sinner with no help in him"? No; he said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." He brought glad tidings. He sought to awaken men to the knowledge of those things of which they were ignorant. Recognising that man was in the darkness and did not know it, he did not condemn but brought light. He made clear a definite law, namely, the law of the kingdom, outlined above. If man would obey the conditions, the desired results would follow; if he refused to obey he would not obtain the results. That indicated that man was to take a certain initiative—pay a certain price.

Jesus makes this law clear by a number of illustrations. If we display mercy, we obtain it. If

we are just, justice comes back to us. If we misjudge, we shall be misjudged. If evil things come out from within, the outer life will be defiled. To live a pure life, we must first have a pure heart. We cannot even harbour anger without reaping the consequences. The law is inexorable. Not in one jot or tittle can it be evaded.

Yet love is here, too, for when a man comes to judgment he learns that by adaptation to the same law he can "make for righteousness," can turn all to love. "Give, and it shall be given unto you." "Ask, and you shall receive." The law is perfect, universal. The whole difficulty is that man has been ignorant of it, and, ignorant, has misspent his energies. He has thought that he could be great by himself; that he could buy a place in the kingdom. He must find out that there is but one road to the highest, namely, the will of God, the way of the divine order.

Others had made clear the law of cause and effect ages before. Judged by the letter, some of the sayings of Jesus were not new. The difference was that where others beheld the law, Jesus took the hardest of all steps, that is, he took the initiative in showing by his conduct that he really believed the law to the last word. If he had faltered where others to whom the alternatives were presented had faltered, his life would have made no more impression than the lives of hundreds of

saints and seers who belong to the level to which those who judge by the letter consign Jesus. But Jesus was faithful even unto the end, and he met crucifixion at the hands of his enemies as he had all along met their revilings and persecutions. He was faithful in thought, word, and deed, and displayed barely enough of the finite to let us know that he was human. We have the record of his triumphant experience when he gave up the last human inclination in favour of the will of the Father. Thus we have the perfect example, so far as human life has revealed perfection. Had we not had the life of Jesus on earth we should not have known the highest law. Otherwise we should have had merely the perception of the law without the life which proves it. The theory is not enough; it is the life that convinces. It is the power of a life, true in every detail to its protestations, which sent out the marvellous power into the world to which the wonderful growth of the Christian centuries is due.

If the law of the divine order is perfect, we of course expect that men will be enlightened concerning "the way, the truth, and the life." There are obviously lessons to be learned from ignorant blundering, but the God of love would not always let men blunder. God so loved the world of His human children, that He sent the divinest light into the world to make clear the way. Jesus re-

vealed the way whereby all could be free from the bondage of ignorance, if they would take up the cross and follow him. Notice the condition again,—if they would "take up the cross." That obviously means that each man must make the supreme move which Jesus made, from the personal to the divine. Once more the responsibility is placed on man.

Of course, if "God is love," there are no "lost" souls in the literal sense of the word, although many may be almost infinitely removed from the knowledge of the truth which sets men free. And, since God is love, He is not the angry Yahveh of a former generation who demands a sacrifice. The idea of offering up a human being in this way belongs to savage times, when men thought they must render tribute to the gods to win their favour. It shows enormous disrespect to the God of love to think that He demanded a propitiatory offering. It would be difficult to give to any of Jesus' sayings any such barbarous meaning. Furthermore a God of love is "no respecter of persons." He is the Father of the people; there are no "elect" or "damned." If is not a question of fate, but of a way open before those who choose to walk in it.

Recollect, then, that Jesus came to bring *life* to light, the life of a higher order. It was his fidelity to the ideal of that life that saved men (those who followed his example), not the death, but the life.

The way of the cross, then, is the way of life. Either we must believe this, or doubt Jesus when he said that he came "that men might have life and have it more abundantly."

The truth in the doctrine of atonement, then, is the law of adjustment to the divine will. When man wanders away and seeks to be something by himself, freedom from the bondage thus created is to be found by returning to the Father's house. It is through oneness, that is, harmony with God, that freedom is attained. The man, for instance, who has brought disease upon himself by a riotous life will find health if he once more obeys the conditions of wise natural existence, in other words, the law or will of God in that respect. Jesus had attained the level where all things are harmonious, and the secret of that harmony was oneness of will with the divine will.

The atonement must be restated in wholly positive terms. Jesus came into the world to show mankind how to live the perfect life. The way which he made clear by living it was adjustment to the divine tendency in the total universe, the law of growth and fulness of cooperation with the divine ideal. There was great sacrifice involved, but it was not a negative sacrifice. It was positive devotion to the ideal of the kingdom.

Is there no truth, then, in the theory of the

divine grace? Unquestionably. Jesus does not say that everything depends on merely human conduct. He calls attention to that as the essential without which the other things shall not be added. *If* man is willing to pay the price, then much will follow which is not in the power of man to give.

Perhaps the best way to illustrate the principle of the new birth is by comparison with the attainments of self-consciousness. How far can introspection be profitably carried? Try to carry it to its extreme limits and you will find yourself imprisoned in your own finite states. You tried to find your soul, and you found a point, a painful point. Analyse love, and you find nought under your introspective microscope. But feel love for some one, manifest your heart in deeds of devoted service, and you shall know by loving what love is. The highest that is in us hides when analytically pursued. Too much self-analysis stultifies all endeavour. Our spontaneous actions reveal elements which we never planned to put in. If we self-consciously say to ourselves, "Now on such a day I will be divinely inspired," the inspiration does not come. The law of the unexpected is a higher law than that of any self-conscious attainment. We mount to heaven on "the stairway of surprise." The kingdom cometh "without observation."

In that wonderful passage where the coming of Nicodemus in the night is described, Jesus says that "the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." He says that man must be born from "above," not "again," as mistranslated. That is, there is a higher manifestation of the Spirit than that which has come from below in the long evolution of life. The purest revelation is from above, at a time when man least expects it. Without this we could never attain the Christ life. It is literally a new birth, a fresh start in life. Granted this, and anything may follow, for the new birth affects man's entire nature. There is not only spiritual illumination, but intellectual quickening and physical re-creation. The new birth is part of the great creative process of the universe. Thus the divine grace has its place as securely as in the old orthodoxy. But it is not the grace of election or foreordination. The divine grace is for all men, for God is a God of love. But the divine grace would have no significance if it were forced upon men. It comes as a gift. One is free to turn aside. Many of those who have attained great spiritual heights freely confess that they denied the Father long ere they finally accepted Him. The divine Spirit is even now constantly breathing upon every human soul,

but few are they who are willing to pay the price of fidelity to it. If there be any unpardonable sin, it is the sin of non-receptivity.

Thus every essential in the orthodox faith is preserved, even the idea of a sudden conversion, for the bud of the spiritual growth within us may burst suddenly when the Spirit is perceived by the willing soul, and when all other courses have been abandoned. The spirit of Christianity remains throughout all change; it is only the wording of it that changes from age to age.

3. The third great point is the law of change from within outward. Salvation not only begins with the individual, but it begins within. Jesus counsels men to enter into the secret place of the Most High, to close the door upon the outer world, and there, in the solitude of the heart, attain that adjustment with the divine will from which all things will follow in the world of our outer life. He further assures us that it is not necessary to ask for special things, or gifts, for all things have been provided in the divine order. There is guidance for each soul. It is only necessary to put one's self in the right attitude, then be faithful to each specific prompting.

Here is the crucial point. It requires great faith to live in this practical world—where every one wants to know where his money is coming from—with entire independence of the world's

standards. Many who follow Jesus to this point would discard his teachings as impractical here. They would insist that there is no evidence of any such law; that every man must shift for himself with no assurance that there is anything to keep him from starvation.

To this one can only reply, "Then the Spirit has not yet breathed upon this man so that he knows the law." But oh, the wonder and beauty of that marvellous provision, that detailed guidance which applies to every possible situation in life! Only those know the law in this fuller sense who have seen the promise fulfilled—then what a mass of evidence! The peculiarity of the situation is that to have the proof one must put one's faith to the test in a way that the sceptics are unwilling to venture. He who does not trust God is practically an atheist. He who does trust God has to venture everything in the world.

For example, it requires great faith to go before a company of people to speak about the spiritual life without previous preparation. Yet those who make the venture assure us that it is literally true that what one shall speak is "given in that hour." Doubt that the way will open for the realisation of the soul's visions is usually founded on impatience. We want the kingdom to come in our way, rather than according to the divine order. Therefore we push, heave sighs, and waste energy.

Again, stress is placed on environment instead of on the forces of the inner life. It is argued that we cannot be Christians until this present commercial age has passed, and man is economically free. But what is life for? If it be for the rearing of souls, if character grows under adversity, we ought to rejoice in the present hard conditions.

4. This brings us to the next great point, namely, that Christianity is social. The discovery of the kingdom within must come first, the individual must come to judgment for and by himself; but he must not pause there. Man is to seek the solitudes of the inner life that he may find the guidance which prepares the way for his social existence. The first test is his willingness to forego all for the Spirit, the next is to trust all to the Spirit, and the third is to love all mankind as brothers, to live for all, serve all.

For man is not only an individual soul, but a social being. He is nothing of and by himself, for he is an organic unit; all men are bound each to each, all are members of one another. This is the more positive side of the renunciation of self. All that one gives up individually is given back socially, enriched an hundred-fold. The Christian socialist is indeed right in insisting that the final test of Christianity is social. This is especially the age of recognition of that great fact. The point of difference is that since Jesus placed emphasis

upon the Spirit rather than on the letter, on the kingdom which cometh without observation, on the realm within where all things have been provided, the true follower of him cannot place the alteration of the social order first, but must begin by fidelity to the Spirit, by manifesting love in any situation in which he finds himself, whether it seem to be favourable or unfavourable.

If "all things have been provided," the social readjustment of environments is included. No man as yet fully believes in the spiritual law who is unwilling to let justice come in its own way. If justice is primarily spiritual it is not likely to come in the way on which the majority of social reformers insist. Many place stress upon material conditions. There is great complaint because some have more than others of this world's goods. But again we must insist that to be a Christian is to make a choice. Jesus even commends the poor man. It may be that precisely in these adverse material conditions one shall have that opportunity which above all others makes the supreme triumph possible. There are greater temptations in these days. So may there be better Christians. Jesus says nothing about waiting until we can be Christians. A man may be a Christian in any situation. The ideal is to be superior to the material condition. If the spiritual comes first in the order of being, nothing, no economic order, can

stand in the way. What the individual cannot do the grace of God can do. To make the supreme consecration of all that one is and all that one possesses is to receive the help of the Spirit, whatever the environing condition. And possibly it is harder for the capitalist to take the great step than for the down-trodden labourer who cries out that he can do nothing under oppression.

5. The fifth great point is that the kingdom comes gradually and in little ways. The old idea of sudden conversion, of belief which settled salvation once for all, was consistent with the thought of God as an external Creator who made the world in six days, or six thousand years, and then retired to watch it and keep it at a distance. The new conception of God takes its clue from evolution, the painstaking law of transformation, in which there are no leaps, and nothing sudden. Throughout all the ages God has been making, is still making the world. The most trivial social change of to-day is as consequential as the physical change of a million years ago. Not reformation, then, as the socialist says; not revolution, as the anarchist says, but imperceptible growth from within, is the great social law. Each individual must come to judgment, attain adjustment, and become one more centre for the growth of the kingdom. The larger social results must come as the greater or the smaller individual deeds. Here is the crucial

point. The life which makes man a Christian is spread out over his whole career. No one deed saves him, although a single heroic deed may be the turning-point. It is the daily life of years and years which shows whether or not he is really a Christian. The process is not so easy and simple as it once seemed. It is the little thoughts, words, and deeds which come out from within, one by one, which at last uplift a man and make him truly regenerate.

6. The next great point is that Christianity is practical. Jesus proved that what he taught was applicable to any situation by actually applying it. When any one in need of light came to him he gave freely. When he met the sinner he manifested the love which helps the sinner on his weary path. The sick he healed, the dead in consciousness he quickened, and the social group he addressed according to its needs, whether or not his judgment was popular. He met his age where he found it, and in every recorded instance unflinchingly stood for the will of God. His doctrine was throughout the practicality of life, not the application of a doctrine reasoned out in advance of experience. Therefore to know whether or not it is practical for you, you must test it by actual life; you should not expect to know all till you have lived all. But be sure that you are testing the spirit of a precept, not its letter. Do not, for

example, be negatively non-resistant; "overcome evil with good."

These, then, are the main points. The kingdom of God is to be found within, where all things have been provided, where the will of the Father is to be learned, where entire consecration is to take place. The soul must understand the law and make actual effort to overcome self, and to live by the law. Then the kingdom of God is to be found in humanity, as the law of love, service. Finally, the kingdom is to be recognised as universal, and by thought, word, and deed social man is to attain complete adjustment to the law of righteousness. Christianity is an empirical system: "By their fruits ye shall know them." It implies that the divine order, socially considered, is a pluralism, that is, a republic of souls owning one Father—not a pantheistic whole in which all is one solid mass. God and the sons of God, existing in a heavenly order—this is the Christian conception, this is the kingdom which Jesus said was "at hand."

CHAPTER XVIII

THE IDEA OF GOD

THE character of the Supreme Being is at once the easiest and the most difficult subject ever considered by the human mind. Every sentence we utter implies the existence of God. We could not leave Him out if we would. Yet the most we can say of nearly all theories of the divine nature is that they are man's ideas printed in larger type. Is it worth while to attempt to transcend temperamental limitations, when so many have failed? Possibly we may at least learn the lesson of these failures. In so far as we have found a clue to the character of the divine order we may surely avoid anthropomorphism. Even the attempt to prove God's existence is instructive; for, as our own consciousness must be prior to the endeavour to understand it, so the existence of God is prior to all theology; hence we know that the divine existence is a gift of experience. Again, the analysis of mysticism shows that, despite the shortcomings of its devotees, we must acknowledge the profound truth of spiritual immediacy. If

reason fails us at certain points, we know that the greater truth requires both feeling and thought to declare its glory. Granted a certain religious consciousness, or sense of the divine, the province of theology is to awaken the mind to fuller recognition of that presence which needs neither logic nor miracle to prove it. Unless we have direct evidence in our lives of a higher Power, the profoundest reasoning may seem shallow. On the other hand, the tests of critical thought may greatly enrich the saner religious sentiments. One should not expect to develop the idea of God by any single process. It is as important to deepen the realisation of what it means to live with God as to discover the reasons for such faith. The empirical method ought to supplement the method of constructive thought. Therefore one should frequently consult one's inner consciousness and ask if the idea of God in question appeals to the spiritual sense as true. This is the profoundest experiment in the laboratory of the soul.

A profitable way to approach the larger thought of God is to analyse some of the outgrown notions, for example, the popular conception of "the plan of God." Finding that the natural world is an exact system, where all things act in accordance with law, where there is instinct, adaptation to ends, man reasons that there must have been a plan as the basis of this marvellous design. Let

us see what this idea implies. A plan implies a beginning at some point in time. It would obviously be absurd to speak of design if the world be eternal. A design implies a looking forward, the adoption of the wisest means for the attainment of a given end. That the end may be attained, the entire intermediate process must be foreseen and determined. Such foresight would involve selection here, rejection there. This must not be too strong, for it is to go with that. That must be adapted to somewhat else. There must be infinite choice in infinite detail. Unless God should know all possibilities and could guard against certain contingencies, the ultimate end would not be assured. A God who should be ignorant of these possibilities would have only a limited range of knowledge; He would not be the infinite Creator which this conception declares Him to be, nor would He be omniscient. It therefore incontrovertibly follows that a God with a plan is a God with power of choice. Time was when God, alone, at rest, said to Himself, "Let us create a world." Accordingly the process of thought began by which the wisest plan was selected. Forthwith the creative fiats were issued, and behold, the world!

This paragraph is scarcely finished before we see that this is the theory which prevailed in the century previous to the rise of the philosophy of

evolution. That this doctrine is hopelessly antiquated is to-day a truism. It was in fact antiquated before it was proposed. Ages before the Christian era profound Greek philosophers maintained that the world was eternal. The early Christian philosophers rejected the larger world-theory because it did not harmonise with their interpretation of Christian cosmology. But what degeneration was there! For the eternal world, creation was substituted; for the theory of many worlds, the earth as the centre of all things. Instead of the philosophical Being, the world was given the Hebrew tribal deity, Yahveh; instead of beauty, asceticism; instead of the Socratic method of truth-seeking, dogma was brought forward; and the world lost for the time many scientific and philosophical doctrines. It was centuries before the inferiority of the creation theory was seen, and then it was a long fight before man won the right to think scientifically, without regard to the dogmas of the Church. But finally the learned world has adopted a theory which is much more akin to the Greek conception. The real Christianity is, however, just as true when viewed in relation to this larger cosmology.

From the modern point of view, the universe is eternal and indestructible. That is, the world-energy is eternally conserved, however much the particular worlds may vary. The forces of nature

have always been active in some form. There has been some sort of evolution, though a planet like our own may not always have existed. No hypothesis is needed to account for the origin of the forces whose activity and form we call matter. Philosophically speaking, they are part of the life of God, and God has always lived. We know no God other than the God of action, therefore we need form no other conception. Our idea of Him must at least be as comprehensive as the evolutions of the eternal energy whose activity modern science describes.

The conclusion that God is larger than the conception known as "deism" is further strengthened by consideration of the supposed precosmic condition of God. If the Creator foresaw every detail and predetermined the "plan" in all its parts, it follows that there never could be an event which would contain the least atom of novelty in the wide, wide universe. If this be all there is in the world, why should God subject Himself to the dreary unfolding of the plan which He perfectly foresaw? The hypothesis is absurd. There must be meaning, growth in the universe. The theory of design is an inadequate account of the world as we find it, for in the world we find human freedom, choice, experience, and the moral law.

If everything were predetermined, there could never be any activity except the buzz and hum

of a smooth-running machine. All supposed beings would be automata. But to exist means for a being to be conscious and to act. The possession of consciousness means something private, individual, as well as something social. The real value in life as we find it in the divine order is *the power of variation and initiative* which we find ourselves possessing. In other words, there are alternatives, details which are undecided, details which we as human beings must decide. Life is rich. There is more than one way to the same end. Since there is indetermination,[1] alternatives that have not been decided, combinations that have not been yet tried, music that has not yet been made,—though of the same notes,—there can be no hard-and-fast world-plan. The persistence of certain permanent relations, modes, and attributes is very different from a plan conceived by a builder in the realm of time.

If a world of some sort has always existed, there is no need of a theory of final causes. Teleology gives place to description. It is a question of the relation between ground and content. In the last analysis the divine order is eternal; its constitution is what it is because God is what He is; for the divine order is the field of activity and self-expression of God. God is, always was, and ever will be. It is not necessary to account for Him,

[1] See James, *The Will to Believe.*

for He is the eternal Reason which accounts for everything. He is in no sense to be described by negative terms, for when language fails that failure does not signify that God is less, but more, than the words imply. He is the source of every quality and the ground of every relation in the total universe. He is not alone what we mean when we inadequately name Him Creator, Father, but infinitely more. In deepest truth He is the reality that is implied in all our attempts to prove His being. Our arguments from design fail because the eternity of His universe surpasses what our poor temporal words convey when we attribute to Him a "plan."

The nature of the divine order at large is thus a direct clue to the nature of God. Whatever exists within that order must have its ground in the divine character. The divine order is itself the system of the divine life. The simplest incident in every-day life is a revelation of the divine. That is to say, since everything is in some sense real, whatever we behold, all that we experience, bears direct relation to the eternal order of things. When we look forth upon the fertile fields and the distant hills, when we reflect on the regularity of the seasons and the marvellous adaptations of nature, there is no reason to suppose that all this is so far removed from reality that we must call it a "shadow," or conclude that some "unknowable"

cause has given rise to it. Yonder tree is a real tree; it exists for God as well as for man and other beings. The laws of its growth are divine laws. Its beauty is part of the divine beauty. Its cause is plainly revealed by its structure and its history. The life and wisdom of God may be read in part by studying the existence of that tree. It would be absurd to separate it, even in thought, from the divine nature.

The only word of caution is this: If you would really know the character of God you must not study that tree alone, but everything that exists. When we discover that the visible world does not exist by itself but is related to an eternal order, we must regard that eternal life as the true clue to its cause. The argument from design fails because "design" implies a very limited affair in a strictly temporal sense. But what was supposed to be true of a fragment of the temporal world may still be true of the great totality of the eternal world. That is to say, God did not formulate a little "plan" six thousand years ago and then retire to observe its development. God is always sending His life forth in creative action; there is no beginning or ending. The universe at all moments is an expression of the divine nature. Expression, not creation, is the great law. God is already here; God is reason, wisdom, power. The divine order is the rationality of His life. The wonderful

facts which have called forth the admiration of men, and led them to conceive of God as Creator, are eternal revelations of His intelligence.

When our investigations lead to the conclusion that there must be a basis for all appearances we know that the divine order is such as to hold just those appearances. When we discover the law of evolution and learn that evolution must have a field of action and habit-forming forces, we know that the divine order is in part just that field, the source of those forces. The facts of individual consciousness lead truly and definitely to the ultimate constitution of things, so do the data of our moral and social experience. It is not the mass of facts which gives the clue. The divine order is far more than the quantitative sum of all things. It is rather the quality of things and their principle of organisation. That is, when we find that in the physical world we have one system of qualities, in the mental world another, and in the moral world a third; when we discover that the present life-round is only part of life, that both the abiding and the transient are needed—from these coexistent systems of facts, with their laws, we may safely reason that the divine order is their harmonious source. Furthermore, as the divine order is thus complex, a system of systems, qualities, and relations, it follows that the nature of God is no less wealthy. For, logically speaking,

God is precisely the supreme reality needed to account for the given universe. With a God not concretely called for by the facts we have nothing to do.

It would be most inadequate to judge the divine character by any particular scheme, such as the orthodox plan of salvation. For the universe is large, resourceful, and fulfils many ends. The existence of nature with all its species of plants and animals, its beauty and system, is plainly one of those ends. Man's physical life in the enjoyment of nature is undoubtedly another. From one point of view, nothing is nobler than to make man's life on earth more pleasant. If man also develops character, that is another end. Artistic self-expression is another; so is the pursuit of scientific truth. To look out on the fair world of nature with unprejudiced eyes, and consider the vast numbers of things that are worth doing, is to realise by contrast the poverty, the unhealthiness of that doctrine which tries to account for life in terms of "salvation." When one's thought rises to the dignity of the divine order, it seems puerile to declare that life exists for any purpose short of life itself in its richly varied totality. The divine order is its own reason for being. It is futile to assign any ulterior end, for it reveals the law and life of the Being of beings, whose nature it is to manifest Himself. So far as the divine order is

purposive we can only say that it exists because God would be imperfect alone; God's perfection is made complete through the eternity of the divine order.

Since the unity of the divine order is a harmony of different systems, we may rightly conclude that the divine nature is a balanced character, a relationship of qualities, not a mere sameness like the pure white ray in which all colours are lost. Our God is not a monotonous "Absolute," who absorbs all things into Himself; He is a God of infinite differences, and the differences are neither lost nor transcended. The supposed "Absolute" of speculative metaphysics is not really God, but the huge totality. The divine order is not simply God; you and I are not God. The divine order reveals God, and is the home, the republic of all finite souls. Individuality is not only of worth in itself but is absolutely essential to the divine order. Were God the speculative "Absolute" He would need no divine order.

God is the universal Being, the Father-Spirit. Man, the particular being, reproduces the universal from a single point of view. You and I in part fulfil the life of God, but we also realise our own ideals. Nature reproduces itself in man, and God is revealed in man, but each in a peculiar way fulfils its own purpose. Hence there is positive value in the forward pulse of things. Each new

moment is in truth a new event in the divine life; not a mechanical unfolding of some predestined "plan." In a profound sense, the universe reveals God in action, God achieving something. The nature of the world is not simply determined by the divine nature, but is a result of the divine will in so far as that will organises the divine ideas. Wise and orderly, the divine nature must, of course, reveal itself in a certain way. But that does not mean that God is bound by severe necessity, that He can introduce no changes. Nor does it mean that He foreknows and determines every detail. All that reason demands is that the divine nature itself shall not change, that reason shall still be reason.

We may then say that as the divine nature is many-sided, wealthy, there is organic interaction in the life of God. Love prompts and wisdom guides. The divine life is harmonious, rhythmical, systematic. It is not like emotion or mere pleasure—without a principle of organisation. It is a rational, orderly life. God is good, and His universal order is organised for the good. Hence the good is not a negation, not an indescribable or mystical good. It is a clearly defined, wealthy good.

As Spirit, God may be said to be without form, but the supreme life which all forms reveal. Yet Spirit is undefined, not the indefinable. We are unable fully to define Spirit by itself, because

Spirit without form does not exist. Order, reason, is the form; Spirit is the life, the love. Only when the two are apprehended together do we have a true idea of God. Hence it is clear why mysticism has failed when it sought to describe Spirit by itself.

To speak truly, we must say that God is at once Spirit and Form, Love and Reason. The divine love and wisdom are inseparable: power and beauty go together. The perfect peace of God is made possible by the perfect beauty, order, organisation. The infinite tenderness of His motherhood exists by virtue of the surpassing strength of His fatherhood. There is, of course, an eternal centre or basis of unity of the many attributes and modes. God is always love, always power, ever wise, ever orderly, beautiful, true, beneficent, just. That is, justice, order, beauty, reigns at the centre and as an ideal, although the temporal attainment of justice, for example, may be long delayed. Hence God is in a sense transcendent. As transcendent, He is essentially unchangeable. That He is thus immutable is clear from the consideration that pure evolutionism or perpetual flux is inadequate when applied to the universe as a whole. If all were in perpetual flux, God would be through and through unstable. We would then have to say with Heracleitus, "Everything flows." It would also follow that there is

no finite soul—only passing thoughts, feelings, and transmitted deeds, "Karma," as in the Buddhistic psychology. There would be mere progress without a being to progress, no God to centralise that progress, and no purpose in any part.

At the centre of all there must be immutability of some sort, undisturbed repose. But this need not be immutability in the absolute sense, as some theorists describe it. Immutability would be inexpressibly dreary if it were absolute. It is immutability with reference to the world of time, change, and finite experience. The divine unchangeableness is organic. Its complement is the Spirit in action. The permanent would be as incomplete without the transient as the latter without the former. God is free to express Himself, to act; yet God is always God; to-day harmonises with yesterday and will harmonise with all possible to-morrows. Along with any display of power, side by side with the transient, the permanent is seen. God is not immutable in one place, far off in the heavens, and active in another. The great Identity is here, there, everywhere, persistent through difference. The permanent is in the transient, and the transient is in the permanent. Every moment has its basis, each place its ground in the Father. Amidst the worst storm there is the calm spot of the peace of God. In the greatest instability of nature God is there.

Each event is thus a centre of energy in the divine life. God must be present at every point in order to be present at any point. Time is His measured activity. Space is one of His forms of objectification. There is one far-off yet ever near divine Life whose nature is both to be and to do, both to know and to act. The "immanent God" is the same Being, working through, active within His universe. That is to say, God is not apart from His world, nor does He work without concrete objects. Whatever exists, receives its nature and life from God. God is now and always the life, the power of energy resident in matter and in consciousness. Every study of evolution is in part a study of the life of God; every datum of consciousness is a gift from Him.

The present conception differs from the merely immanental theory, since it reserves room for God unmanifested. That is, God does not exhaust Himself in His world-activity; He is not merely the life or substance of the universe. He also transcends, is larger than, the world. This conception is also differentiated from pantheism in all of its forms. It does not assert that God *is* the world, either viewed as nature, as consciousness, or as the spiritual unity of nature and consciousness. The world *reveals* God, is part of God's activity; but it is not all of God, therefore is *not the same* as God. Yet one would like to bring God as near as

pantheism does when it worships nature as God, or identifies the mystical experience with Him. Many who write of God's immanence employ decidedly pantheistic statements, so that some critics have classed certain immanental theories as pantheistic. But this resemblance to pantheism is verbal, not intentional. The writers are so eager to express the union of God and man that they inadvertently fall into pantheistic speech.

The present theory may for convenience be called organic theism, that is, God is regarded as Father-Spirit amid many son-spirits or moral individuals. He is a Being whom one can love and worship.

In a theistic world, the distinctions between souls and the world are real, continuous. The sons of God, while not separated from God, do not become God, any more than a human father absorbs his child. In the soul's highest visions the Father may indeed recognise Himself in part; but that is far from being an exhaustive statement of the vision, for the individual point of view has permanent worth in itself. To say that God is resident in the world of our consciousness, that He is the Life of our life, is not, therefore, to maintain that the life that is immanent in us is all there is in the human self. In this inquiry we are seeking to be true to all phases of life, and the facts point to the existence of finite selves as

surely as they point to the being of God. Each of us is a centre of consciousness, of choice, freedom, activity; each is an individual with desires, aspirations and a meaning; and we must find place for all these personal data, all our social relations, as well as a place for our relationship with God. There are many coexistent experiences within the same field.

No prophetical theory of an atonement or reconciliation can be adequate. Just what it means to be united in will, in spirit with God, we shall not know until we are so united. Fully to know is first fully to be. All that we now need to say is, There is God, and also His republic of souls, advancing into fuller knowledge of their relation to Him. The sons of God are on the road to higher adjustment with Him, as they are also on the road to fuller moral adjustment with one another. In other words, God has a many-sided experience in relation to us and to His world; and we have our individual experiences. We know not how far these experiences coincide. My life is unlike yours, and I only know by inference that it is in any way like your life. I cannot transcend myself and become you; I can only picture to myself how you may possibly feel and think. My point of view is decidedly mine. It may be that in a sense it will always be distinctively mine, that even God may never see things as I do, because He

has never had the experience. But that possibility need not trouble me, for if it be true, life may be all the richer. At any rate, there is a deep repugnance towards anything which savours of absorption.

In so far as there are data which are not yet unified, we gladly hold them in solution. If we could now unify them all, our great pursuit would already be ended. If we tried to force all these data into a unitary system, the chances are that there would be many fragments left over. The history of philosophy shows that this has always been the result when men have tried to square their philosophic accounts. Our general conclusion is that it is impossible from one point of view alone to develop a satisfactory idea of God. If we conceive God as a Creator, we are disloyal to other aspects of the divine nature. If we define Him as "impersonal" we slight His fatherhood. If we deem Him one with our mystical vision, we neglect His revelation in the world of nature. To assert that He is merely nature is to overlook the truth of our higher spiritual experience. To say that He is simply immanent is to forget that He is also transcendent. To identify Him with will is to forget that He is wisdom. To declare that He is reason is to disregard the fact that He is love. To deem Him merely a larger soul among human souls is to be untrue to His greatness as the source

of the moral order and the spiritual unity of humanity. Thus, to define is to limit Him, yet in a sense all definitions are true. That is, we find the natural order, the moral order, the independence yet the sociality of man; the temporal and the eternal; the changeable and the permanent; and we conclude that God is the ground of all these in such a way that none shall be injured or absorbed. The universe is many-sided, man is many-sided, therefore God is many-sided, organic. The ground is all that springs from it. The divine order is founded in the divine character. It is known by reason, revelation, religion, philosophy, art, service—all that constitutes life at its best, as well as through the miseries and struggles of our long animal and moral evolution. Nothing is excluded; everything belongs within, nothing outside. The universe is both the interaction of souls and the manifestation of God; the mutual, objectified, organic experiences of the Father and the republic of all His creatures.

Through our senses we perceive one phase of the divine order, through reason, the æsthetic sense, feeling, love, struggle, social life, yet other phases. No part of our experience is merely a dream, every thought is a revelation of God. It is impossible to understand the divine order physically, because it is more than physical. It is impossible to grasp it scientifically, for science does not include all of

life; the divine order exists not alone for truth but for beauty. Nor can it be circumscribed in terms of morality. We must know it in organic relation, we must be as multi-organic as possible, in as many-sided adjustment as possible. To be sound physically, intellectually, morally; to be artistic, philosophical, altruistic; to be Christlike, is to possess in one's self so many clues to the character of God. God is at once the true, the beautiful, and the good; the soul is also all of these; and the soul, by being good, beautiful, and true, may know the goodness, truth, and beauty of God. True society is the organic fulfilment of all these. And to know the true God is at once to be all these in part, and through this manifoldness to share and thus far see the whole. The same limitations which seem to shut us out from knowledge of God prove to be revelations of Him when we behold their unity, when we see that it is just this relational, organic character of our experience which makes knowledge of Him possible. Once learn that any definition of God is inadequate in part, yet true in part, and you begin to appreciate its organic value, you do not expect what it cannot give. Therefore rise to the thought of the universal, and you shall feel that primal inspiration which you may express as truth, beauty, or goodness, or all of these. The presence shall inspire you to artistic performance, to voice yourself in

some form of rhythm, poetry, or music, to the inculcation of truth, or to service, according to your temperament, desire, or quickening.

The present study of the divine nature is not meant to supersede previous discussions. In other volumes I have tried to suggest the intimate nearness of the divine Father, even at the risk of indulging in pantheistic language, and one of the volumes [1] is entirely devoted to the practice of the presence of God. Our present purpose is philosophical, namely, to render more explicit the idea of God implied in our studies of the divine order. When the soul longs for fellowship with the divine it is Jesus who best of all guides the way to the Father. Nothing can take the place of that personal sense of the divine presence which makes Him in very truth our God. To behold is far more satisfying than to theorise. Yet, so rich is our life with Him that there is a part of our nature unsatisfied unless we also philosophically grasp what we have spiritually perceived. The idea of God is far inferior to the love of God; the life surpasses the doctrine. But more deeply to know is more truly to live. Thus the thought of the divine beauty is one more clue to that surpassing joy which is ever quickened within us when we lift our souls in worship and in prayer.

[1] *Living by the Spirit.*

CHAPTER XIX

CONSTRUCTIVE IDEALISM

THE term "idealism" has two general meanings as ordinarily employed. It is frequently used to denote a certain type of philosophical theory, namely, the doctrine which describes experience in terms of consciousness, or ideas, rather than in terms of material things. Berkeley's philosophy is an example of this type of idealism. The term also denotes any practical doctrine concerned with the inculcation of ideals. In art and literature, idealism is contrasted with realism and naturalism. In ethics, it denotes that type of moral theory which finds its highest sanctions in the intuitions or *a priori* laws of the inner life, as contrasted with evolutionary ethics. In philosophy, it is not only contrasted with materialism, but with realism and numerous uncritical systems, and is subdivided into a number of historical forms. Generally speaking, philosophical idealism is based on a critical examination of the data of consciousness. In some of its forms the world is regarded as the expression of

the idea of God. Other systems of idealism place more emphasis on the individual self. Idealism is not necessarily monistic, nor does it necessarily mean that nature is a shadow or illusion. As opposed to the independence which materialism attributes to physical things, idealism declares that we know the world only through mind. But nature is not said to be less real because it is thus known.

As here employed, the term will be used in both its practical and its philosophical sense. We hold that applicability to the practical issues of human life is one of the tests of philosophical idealism. On the other hand, we accept those ideals as truly practical which have undergone the tests of constructively analytical thinking. The same analysis which proves that the world is apprehended by means of ideas is of practical value when regarded from another point of view, for that which is most profoundly true is must truly practical. To discover that life is known in terms of one kind of experience, namely, the relations and developments of ideas, and to find the ultimate source of that experience in the divine life, is to possess knowledge of utmost value in daily life. Since experience possesses a system which reason can understand and make explicit, it also possesses an order which may be depended on in the realm of conduct.

Idealism has sometimes ended in critically negative analysis. Nowadays it is often identified with the problems of knowledge. Again, it is sometimes limited to the development of a theory of the "Absolute" in which all finite items of experience are harmonised, but which offers no assurance that things will turn out well in this world of ours. As opposed to these theoretical idealisms, the present doctrine is constructive in the largest sense. The present system is not an idealism of thought simply, but an idealism of experience. That is to say, the primary evidence that there is a God is not the demand that there shall be a logical object of all completed thought. The first evidence is *empirical*. Reality is primarily immediate. The soul is in living relation with a higher order. The realm of feeling possesses an authority of its own. Hence the office of thought is not simply to develop a theory which shall please itself. The true philosophy is at once empirical and constructive. It must satisfy not only the demands of thought, but the demands of the religious life and of every-day conduct.

The first name chosen for the present system was "organic empiricism." The term "organic" was employed to denote the many-sidedness of experience,—the fact that no one department of life is the source of all truth, but truth must

be a co-operative product; and "empiricism" denoted the tentative, changing, promising character of our many-sided experience. But "empirical idealism" is a better term, since experience, although many-sided, is of *one general type;* it is an experience in terms of ideas. The term "constructive idealism" carries the definition a stage farther; for, however varied experience may be, and however much allowance one must make for future experience of other types, the final work of philosophy is to recast the data of experience in terms of constructive thought.

The philosopher of pure experience might contend that experience as given is chaotic. We have, for example, now a sensation of heat, now a feeling of pleasure, now an angry sentiment, and now a thought of love. The world of our inner life is a mass of contending and contrasted mental states. Out of this mass each man may indeed construct his particular theory of unity or order, but that "construct" still remains his own. We find such uniformity in nature as we carry to nature. We know not what new type of experience may upset all calculations. There is no single formula large enough to hold all types of individual truth.

There is profound truth in these contentions, but it is possible to overestimate the importance of presented experience. Experience as given is

always an item to be reckoned with. But the fact that the presented mass of our mental states is chaotic by no means shows that we cannot pass beyond the chaos. It is indeed true that each of us tends to reconstruct his own little world in terms of some kind of uniformity. It is true in a sense that even the uniformities on which all scientific theories depend are in part hypothetical conceptions. The great men of science are free to confess that nature is "practically uniform"; that the mechanical theory is far more exact than nature can be shown to be, but that does not prove that the orderliness of nature is subjective. It would be an enormous assumption to declare that experience does not possess a permanent order quite independent of our thought.

Karl Pearson has written a large volume[1] to show that the facts with which science deals are our own sense-perceptions, while the theories of science are convenient formulas, shorthand accounts of those perceptions. But this is simply to make the first step towards idealism. No philosopher would be satisfied to stop with sensationalism. The fact that, as Professor Pearson admits, our sensations exemplify a certain *order*, immediately suggests the question, How happens it that experience possesses an order so exact that it can be described by mathematical formulas?

[1] *The Grammar of Science*, new edition, 1902.

To answer that question it is necessary to press far beyond the point where Pearson's book ends.

Professor Ward's two volumes, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, are in a sense an impeachment of scientific theories, since the exactness of those theories surpasses the verifiable exactness of nature, and since there are enormous gaps in modern scientific explanation. But this arraignment shows rather the present inadequacy of science, and the failure of a few antiquated writers like Herbert Spencer. Philosophical idealism is still the conclusion to which all such studies lead, and idealism must still await the completion of natural science before its own descriptions shall be complete.

Professor James has pointed out that men of science, as well as religious and philosophical thinkers find as much unity and system in nature as they attribute to nature, and he is constantly calling attention to the fact that none of these unities is large enough to hold all that nature contains. Yet this consideration once more shows the surpassing wealth of nature. If nature frequently upsets our calculations, she also impresses us by her stupendous orderliness. It is our own thought that is disjointed.[1]

[1] It remains to be seen whether the "pluralism" of such philosophers as F. C. S. Schiller, Professors Howison and James, can be satisfactorily developed into a system. Thus far, the empirical pluralism of Professor James is the most promising.

The orderliness of things may indeed seem chaos to us at first. Experience as immediately presented may reveal no intelligible principle, but that does not make against the reconstructive power of thought. The fact that presented sense-experience does not supply its own principle of organisation is one of the profoundest discoveries of idealism. Ever since the days of Plato it has been clear that nothing is intelligible as "given." Sensation is mere "knowledge of acquaintance," as Professor James calls it. It is subject to manifold illusions. Our emotional nature, for example, is the field of violent excesses. There are morbid mental and physical states to be eliminated. There are innumerable conflicting thoughts and feelings which demand analysis and a standard of judgment. The imagination exaggerates and must be tempered. Intuition sees too much; prejudice distorts; temperament deflects; mysticism interferes. The intellect alone is cold and prosaically analytical. The heart is warm, but it is not the whole world. Everywhere in the mental world there is need of critical examination and reconstruction. When the utmost has been said in favour of the reality of immediacy, it is still true that thought adds a type of experience which must be taken account of in the final analysis.

What shall be the principle of organisation? There cannot be the least doubt in regard to the

answer. It is reason—critical, comparative, constructive. When we look forth upon the face of nature and inquire into its constitution and its laws, we discover that it has been here a very long, long while. Whether or not it was developed from chaos does not concern us, for, however old, nature is now highly organised; nature is no first attempt at system.

There are innumerable evidences of highly developed, intelligible order. That order persists despite anything man does or thinks. It is the highest office of science to describe that order. If science is still an imperfect reconstruction, it can only be because men of science are not yet able to raise their thought to the dignity of nature; they do not yet know all the facts and laws, hence they must still make use of hypotheses. If man would truly know nature he must imitate nature's order, must organise the items of experience in accordance with the laws which the universe reveals. Reason is the faculty which enables him to do this. Reason in man corresponds to order in the universe. The system of the divine order is reason itself.

Idealism, as here set forth, does not, then, assert that the world is *in* the mind. The world is *presented to the mind*, exists "for" the mind, is *known by* the mind. If the world were present "in" my mind simply, I could change the order of my

psychic states at will. I can indeed change my *thought* about the world as presented to me. It is easy from the point of view of a certain theory of knowledge to describe the world as simply existing "for" my thought. But I cannot by an act of will change the character of the world or even modify the laws of my private experience. My knowledge is one fact, my will is another possession; but the world is a hard-and-fast reality stretching endlessly beyond my will. The fact that I know it in terms of mental experience does not for one moment take from its reality. My thought belongs to reality; so does my will, and so do I. Reconstructed thought enables me to turn once more to experience to verify or correct it. Thus there is a perceived order and a conceived order. Thought constantly reacts upon experience and endeavours to lift conception to the level of what the perceived order proves itself to be, when repeatedly interpreted. All interpretations must be scrutinised. But there is no ground for ultimate scepticism, since we are not without the ability rationally to reconstruct experience in such wise that further experience substantiates reason. The fact that reason must verify itself by experience does not mean that reason is untrue. The fact that presented experience is inadequate without reason by no means proves that experience is not real.

The economical idealism of Berkeley is accepted as a part of the present system. The idealistic theory of nature is economical because it makes only those assumptions which are demanded by experience as concretely given. The hypothesis of a material substratum divorced from mind is entirely superfluous. Nature is not a collection of separate things or atoms, but a system of living organisms, a world of organised energy. It reveals the activities of conscious beings, is the bond of union common to finite beings and the great Father-Being. It is known through consciousness, and cannot be sundered from consciousness. But it is no dream, no mere appearance. It is truly real, significant. Although not the product of a mere "plan," it is nevertheless a continuous revelation of the creative activity of God, part of His experience, life of His life. It is part of the divine order, hence it is scientifically describable in terms of law, system, evolution. Yet nature as a whole cannot be adequately understood alone, precisely because it is part of the eternal order.

The optimism of Leibniz finds place in the present system in so far as it emphasises the organic orderliness of things, the principle of gradual mental development, the uniqueness of the individual, and the reign of goodness, wisdom, and beauty. But the present doctrine is empirical,

not mechanical optimism. To assume that the entire goodness and beauty of things is already determined, so that life is merely an unfolding, is to rob experience of its greatest meaning. The divine order is the best universal system, so far as one knows, because it combines the maximum of opportunity with the minimum of interference.

Spinoza shows how one may retain the conception of eternity, yet avoid the irrational negations of mysticism. To behold all things "under the form of eternity" through the "intellectual love of God" is indeed to enjoy the spiritual vision. Yet one may follow Spinoza thus far without accepting either his naturalism, his pantheism, or his theory of practical life.

Emerson exemplifies the ideal method of adaptation to the spontaneous developments of the higher consciousness, fidelity to individual thought, poetic interpretation of spiritual experience. No seer has surpassed, and few have equalled him in this capacity. Yet there is a wealth in Emerson's essays and poems which he did not organise. Plato contributes the method of organisation, the practical and philosophical concept of order. The surpassing wealth of Plato's idealism reminds us that the thought of the divine order is far too great to be encompassed by any one system of terms. The great consideration is not the speculative defect in Plato's system whereby the world

of nature is subordinated and the realm of Ideas put too far away, but the sublime insight which Plato imperfectly reported. So with Aristotle, Plotinus, the mediæval mystics, Spinoza, Leibniz, Berkeley, Kant, Hegel, and other philosophers who have had the great idealistic intuition—each has made report in his own way, and each has exaggerated certain details. But the essential is the perceived reality which they tried to describe. Their failures do not point the way to scepticism, but to greater appreciation of the reality whereof they made individual report.

The present system, when fully worked out, will have much in common with the constructive idealism of the Neo-Hegelians. The question of the relation of one's theory of knowledge to the conception of the "Absolute" is postponed for consideration in another volume. In the inquiry thus far we have found no need of an Absolute Being. Nor is there any need of a Spencerian "Unknowable," or Kantian "Thing-in-itself." All the reality we require is what is needed to account for experience of the type actually found. All our experience is relative, it is all relational. There is no single authority, no all-sufficient method. No experience is adequate by itself; no self or being is all-complete. Experience is rational up to the highest point, but reason must be referred again to experience, and must make re-

servations in its favour. The facts and unifications of knowledge are only such as our experience thus far demands. There is no need to look beyond the living God to find the highest self or reality. The divine order, although eternal in the heavens, is also everywhere about and within us, here on earth.

Thus the present system is organic through and through. Since no experience is regarded as absolute; and since no point of view, no science, no spiritual vision, no nation, not even nature, is knowable by itself, the utmost that any experience, any datum contributes is an organic point of view. In the final summation of things all points of view must be organically adjusted without sacrifice of individuality. Even the relationship of God, the soul, and the world is organic. God is incomplete without His universe. His republic of souls is naught without Him. Nature could not exist alone, yet nature, as the bond of union, contributes both to man and God.

The method pursued is to start with the concrete facts of life, and seek to understand their laws and significance. This method is pursued as the corrective of that mode of reasoning whereby man has wandered off into the abstract, the absolute, and lost touch with many-sided, practical life. Man may be artist, artisan, poet,

musician, statesman, man of letters, scientist, seer, philanthropist, saint, or philosopher. No man is at the same time all of these. Yet all of these and all other types, taken collectively, tell us what human nature is. Reasoning from appearance to reality, we know that what is found in embodied life must be resident in its ground or source. Therefore ultimate Being is describable as many-sided variety in unity. Amid the superficial contrast and conflict of forces there is fundamental balance, poise, peace at the heart of things. The organic whole consists of God, man, and the world, existing in mutual relation. It is not God simply, for that would be pantheism. It is not the world simply, for that might be materialism. Nor is it man simply, since that would be subjective idealism. It is ultimate Being, or God, finding His expression through the world of manifestation, existing in many forms and on many planes; the republic of human souls, over which God presides as Father; and the realm of nature, a theatre for the interplay of human and divine activity. Only the eternal whole shall be perfect, and its perfection cannot be understood apart from its progressive development. Without the clue of evolution, it is therefore impossible to search out perfection.

Consciousness is the universal fact, the starting-point in the interpretation of the divine order.

We awaken into a world of conscious experience, the nature, laws, and significance of which we progressively discover. The nature of our fundamental experience gives us the clue to the nature of the universe, so far as we know it. The worlds of nature and human souls are directly revealed in our consciousness by the continuous activity of God, from whom the efficient power comes. Reality is made known through limitations and relations, not shut out by them. The most negative critique of agnosticism leaves us a positive alternative, with greater evidence in its favour than for the negative proposition. As opposed to agnosticism, then, the proposition is here maintained that our intuitive and rational organism is *a true cognitive constitution*, gives us real knowledge of reality; the world of natural evolution is revealed to us by the activity of God: it is actually known through our consciousness, our ideas. Space, time, change, growth, and appearances are real facts in the divine order. There are no "mere appearances."

Our point of view of interpretation is throughout that of Plato and all who have insisted that the lower must be understood in relation to the higher. We do not subordinate the lower, as Plato and the mystics have. We call it neither "illusion" nor "appearance." On the other hand, we do not extol evil into a dreadful enemy.

The fact of evil demands calm consideration from the point of view of what man truly is, the order to which he belongs, and the law of evolution by which he conquers. It is time to begin to talk more about the orderliness to which man can conform, in so far as he is enlightened, and to make the problem of evil a part of the work of education. We have heard too much about "sin," and not enough about that Platonic ideal of many-sided adjustment in which even virtue must refrain from excess.

We must take into account all that man is if we would understand him; we must have perspective. Since man is a soul, a son of God; and since there is a higher, unseen realm where the ideals of this life are fulfilled, it were futile to expect to know this life by itself. Professor James's contentions that *outcomes*, not origins; *values*, not facts alone, are to decide, has profound significance when applied to the thought of immortality. Not until we enter the fuller life can we ever begin to close accounts. There are values, important truths, all along the way. Each day is of value while it passes. But there are also values and truths that accumulate.

In order to understand to what extent the present system differs from mysticism we should recollect that mysticism has assumed many forms. Elsewhere I have examined and rejected

certain of its forms.[1] In the present volume we have found no ground for the acceptance of any of the disparaging negations of mysticism, and we have entirely rejected pantheism. The other types and characteristics of mysticism are admirably treated in Inge's Bampton Lectures,[2] in which Hindoo influences are carefully distinguished from Platonism and Christianity, and the development of the different types is traced down to the time of Wordsworth and Browning. The author shows how the *via negativa* was gradually separated from the positive method of purification, illumination, and union. We read less and less about the "darkness" and "nothingness" of speculative mysticism, and more about the practical and devotional types; nature-mysticism, symbolism, and the poetic interpretation of the religious life. It is clear that the mystic, like all men, has his problems. He is not necessarily a visionary, is usually a reformer, and his office is to call attention to the neglected resources of the inner life.

Among the errors of mysticism pointed out by Inge, we may note the following: (1) The error of regarding the consciousness of self as the measure

[1] *The Perfect Whole*, 1896, Chapter on "Mysticism"; *Voices of Freedom*, 1900, "An Interpretation of the Vedanta."

[2] *Christian Mysticism*. New York, Scribner's Sons, 1899.

of personality. (2) The attempt to pass beyond human life, with its ties and the fact of love, to a vaguely far-off "Absolute"; or, as Inge puts it, "trying to reach the universal by wiping out all the boundary lines of the particular, and to gain infinity by reducing self and the world to zero."[1] Inge shows that the negative way leads to vacancy, and he regards "the *via negativa* in metaphysics, religion, and ethics as the great accident of Christian mysticism."[2] (3) Pantheism is "a pitfall for mysticism to avoid, not an error involved in its first principles."[3] A prevailing fault of pantheism is that it regards everything as equally divine. (4) The ignoring of the problems of human imperfection and the problem of evil. (5) The deification of self. (6) The obliteration of the distinctions between the Creator and His creatures. (7) The separation from practical, social life.

On the other hand, Inge finds very much to commend in the *Theologia Germanica*, in the writings of Eckhart, Ruysbroek, Suso, Tauler, and the great Spanish mystics; and he calls attention to a number of neglected English seers. In

[1] *Christian Mysticism*, p. 98. Emerson says that "mysticism consists in the mistake of an accidental and individual symbol for a universal one."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 115. That is to say, negative mysticism and pantheism are due to Hindoo influences.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 121.

the more practical mystics there is "an unfaltering conviction that our communion with God must be a fact of experience, and not only a philosophical theory. With the most intense earnestness they set themselves to live through the mysteries of the spiritual life, as the only way to understand and prove them." [1] Tauler shows that separation from God is the source of all misery. All these mystics point out the differences between the lower and the higher life, and enlarge our knowledge of the human personality.

Yet Inge turns even from the most practical of the mystics to the New Testament with the conclusion that in Johannine and Pauline Christianity we have a much higher type of the religious life, one which includes in purer form all that is best in the writings of the mystics. One finishes even this scholarly book, with its keen appreciation of the sounder phases of mysticism, with the feeling that mysticism is a passing stage in the religious life. That which the author most highly commends is freest from that which is usually called mysticism. Nearly all the great mystics were led astray by speculative influences which spread in the West through Neo-Platonic channels. Mysticism becomes more attractive the farther distant it is from India. It has played a valuable part as a reactionary movement. But

[1] *Christian Mysticism*, p. 167.

when its saner teachings are organised in acceptable social life, what is left can hardly be called mysticism.

Jesus declares that men shall "see God," but it is "the pure in heart" who shall have this great joy, those who live with and serve their fellowmen. Since it is a cardinal error of mysticism that it has sought the fulness of the Godhead by isolated contemplation, the moral is that only through the completest social life shall the Father really be known. What Inge calls the Johannine Christianity is really the gospel of love. Neither John nor Paul countenance the customary mystical methods. Had the Christian mystics really apprehended the spiritual simplicity of the Gospel they would have had no need to seek a speculative solution of their problem. One's Christianity need not be of the conventional Trinitarian type of which Inge approves, to the belittlement of other types and the relegation of Emerson to the category of "the dangerous." [1] But, generally speaking, one is inclined to agree with his conclusions and apply to his volume the same tests which the profounder volume by Professor James suggests.

Reinterpreted, there is little mysticism left in mysticism. Mystical experiences simply con-

[1] See p. 322. Inge entirely misses the profoundest thought in Emerson's *Essays*.

stitute one more class of empirical evidences for constructive idealism to scrutinise and assimilate. There need be no mysticism about the fact that the soul is in immediate relation with an invisible order of being. For the realities of the higher order are not made known otherwise than by the law of all "knowledge of acquaintance," that is, primarily through sentiency, immediacy. If there be mystery in the fact that we apprehend a higher influence, so is there in the fact that we feel the wind playing upon the face, or behold the beauties of nature. Idealism shows that the entire universe reveals God; and the universe is primarily known because it is felt, perceived. If there are illusions in the sense-world, so are there illusions in the domain of religious emotion. The whole world is the object of science. The whole world is the object of religion. Fully to know any one department is to know all, and in all spheres of thought reconstructive scrutiny is required. You may be a sensualist, if you choose; or you may cherish your mystical experiences in the form in which they come. But if you really wish to understand, you must rationally organise; and to organise is to pass beyond mysticism. There are very many practical doctrines in the writings of the mystics which may be rationally assimilated into the larger religious life. But in the last analysis it is that larger life which interests

us, the broader human experience of the spiritual type.

The present idealistic theory may, therefore, be further defined as spiritual idealism of the empirical type. The word "empirical" here means that the entire life of the divine order is in part an experience. Not that the divine system changes, but that the supreme beauty, goodness, wisdom, of the divine order is revealed through the attainments of its members; something is being accomplished which will not be fully known until it has been perfectly done.[1] There is a large, inclusive tendency working through things, making for that which is good in the long run (not for superficial, immediate good). We must look deeply into events to find this tendency. We must penetrate the storm to the calm spot, know both appearance and reality. Even then we cannot predict the exact outcome. We can only say that, beneath the apparently fatal conflicts of human society there is a forward tendency which is unconquerable, a somewhat which gives a higher turn to things than even the wisest of men could foresee. And we may confidently declare that the goal toward which this tendency is making is spiritual, is for eternal ends, the soul, the immortal life—not for the ends of this lower level of fleshly experience.

[1] *Cp.* Professor James, *The Will to Believe.*

The word "spiritual" does not here imply any assumption of spirituality. "Spiritual" is a vague, mystical term as popularly used. It is here restored to its highest significance, as a designation of the divine life. "God is spirit" is a fundamental premise. That is to say, God the Father is in part describable as everywhere, unseen, unlike visible things, present in the mind and heart of man. Spirit, coupled with form, order, reason, is the highest Being, the supreme source of wisdom, life, power, love, and goodness. The world reveals the glory of spirit. Men, as sons of God, are spiritual beings whose highest prerogative is to apprehend and manifest the Supreme Being, each in his own way. The spiritual life in the broad sense of the term is not only that mode of conduct which is inspired by consciousness of the divine order, but it is the Platonic, symmetrical life, and is characterised by love and the service of humanity. In the specific sense, the spiritual life is the type through which reality is most truly revealed. Spiritual idealism in conduct thus makes for spiritual idealism in the philosophical sense of the word.

In so far as spirituality is implied in this doctrine, it will be discovered in the life and through the observations of each individual. The ultimate verification of its truth is to be found in *the ability to place one's self in the same relations*, to

experience the presence of God in order to know the realities of God. The life stands first; knowledge of its laws is secondary. Reason may indeed formulate the doctrine, test it, and pronounce it true or false. If it proves to be a logically consistent whole, so much the better. But as this is not the first value of the doctrine, it would be unfair to reject it when merely judged in relation to a particular logical theory.

Yet the fact that the present doctrine puts so much stress upon the great realities of religion does not mean that the system, when fully developed, will be any less critically philosophical. The guiding motive of the series of volumes, of which this is the eleventh, has been the adjustment between practical and philosophical interests, intuition, and reason. Philosophy has wandered too far from the concrete evidences of the higher things of life. It has valued theoretical consistency above facts which are so wealthy that they burst the bounds of theoretic logic. It has almost entirely disregarded immortality as an empirical idea. It has overlooked the profound truth which mysticism so often misstates. On the other hand, religion has become overtheological; while practical life has neglected the treasures of philosophy. There must be a larger reconstruction in which religion and practical life shall aid philosophy. Each devotee must grow in orderly

adjustment that he may the better appreciate the beauty and meaning of the divine order. *For the divine order is not to be understood from any one point of view.* It is an order that we can rely upon, a basis of faith, an object of worship, a source of inspiration. But it is also an order to think about, to interpret. The highest ideal is the cultivation of that organic individuality which poetically appreciates while it as faithfully contributes, which seeks ethical adjustment, but also socially serves. Each individual may thus reproduce the divine order in his own life and thereby enrich the universe. Nothing short of organic perfection is worthy of our divine sonship. Yet that sonship is alone made perfect through its relationship with the social order completed in the divine order.

One of the great practical lessons of our study of the divine order is, therefore, adjustment. In the first analyses of experience we discover an order, not our own, to which both thought and conduct must conform. Experience is an affair of ideas, and ideas are more or less plastic. But the order of experience in the larger sense of the word is due to a reality far superior to our wills. There is first an order of consciousness; then consciousness is differentiated into the order of nature and the order of thought. Within the larger system we also find the social order and the moral

cosmos. Around and beyond our private consciousness religious insight also perceives an immediately environing spiritual realm, a source of superior wisdom and power. Thought also distinguishes the idea of God. The divine order is the supreme order which holds all this in one system. To all these orders within the great system thought adjusts itself. The clue to this adjustment is the rational system of the individual.

Yet rational adjustment in philosophic thought is itself secondary to the adaptation of conduct with the ideal of complete social and spiritual adjustment in view. The practical idealism of Plato is a splendid guide to the many-sided adaptation of the individual life. Obviously, one must cultivate moderation in all things,—poise, balance, harmony. Life must become a fine art. This artistic life sometimes ends in self-culture, but it need not stop there. If it ends with mere self-realisation it is not yet perfect. The Platonic ideal is also an ethical, a social ideal. And there is nothing in the artistic world of Greek life which Christianity cannot assimilate and transfigure.

The highest as well as the most comprehensive clue to adjustment is made known when Jesus counsels men to apprehend and exemplify the Father's will. That will is the will of the divine order. It makes for harmony, peace, goodness. The realisation of the social ideal of the divine

kingdom is the highest attainment of individuals. That we are members one of another and may become a divine organism in very truth—this is the profoundest message of all. Philosophy may indeed follow, and complete its account of the divine order by actual description of life in the Christian republic. Yet it shall no longer dictate any of the terms, but verify the great truth which has guided our investigation all along. That is, the divine order declares its own law, makes known its own consistency. In the ultimate analysis, the philosopher is a "surprised spectator" of the surpassing beauty of the universe. He beholds, adores, and reports as best he may, ever bearing in mind the great fact that many systems are needed to organise the multiform truth, life, love, power. It is "the pure in heart" who shall see God. Not until the life is complete shall knowledge be made perfect. And when that day shall come it will be those who most fully put self aside who shall reveal the law, because they possess the love.

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